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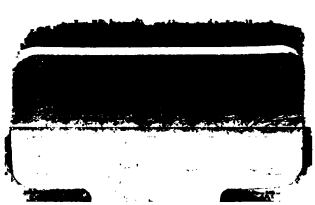


PARENTAL WISDOM;

OR,

THE PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL BEARINGS

OF

EDUCATION,

WITH

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF ITS POWER,

Its Political Importance, &c.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WRONGS OF POLAND."

[J. Antrobus.]

"CREAVIT DEUS HOMINEM AD IMAGINEM SUAM."—GENESIS.

"AD INTELLIGENDUM ET AD AGENDUM."

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1849.

57377

London: J. Rider, Printer, 14, Bartholomew Close.

The Respects To The
Editor Of The
Biblical Repository

LB675
A55A4

TO THE

PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND PRECEPTORS

OF

British Youth,

AND TO ALL

WHO TAKE A CORDIAL AND CHRISTIAN INTEREST

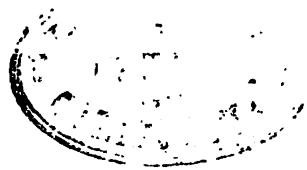
IN THE

GREAT QUESTION OF EDUCATION,

THIS VOLUME

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.



PREFATORY ADDRESS,

COMPRISING

REMARKS ON SOME POINTS OF LEADING AND MODERN INTEREST, AND ON THE CHARACTER AND DESIGN OF THE PRESENT WORK.

EDUCATION is the theme of all ages, and of highest and universal import; but it is one whose latent merits, and long-sought desiderata, have seemingly evaded research, and baffled the wisdom of man. Volume after volume has appeared, and systems and societies have been long progressing and labouring; but all, apparently, with so little success, that the main question of "The social and moral training of the human mind," is still the object of anxious inquiry, and has been of late, more earnestly agitated, than at any preceding period, — a striking proof of the difficulties with which it is surrounded, and leading us to infer, that either its beneficial agency has been neutralized by insuperable obstacles, or, that its primary essentials, from their occult nature, have hitherto eluded the grasp of reason, remaining to be fully tested by the protracted experience of future ages, or by the intelligence and industry of a happier era; for, when an agency so extensive has been long operating with

so little effect, it is a plain indication either of error in mistaking the true nature and root of the evil, and consequently of its remedy, or, (which is more probable) that the question has never been taken up with that spirit and energy which are indispensable to success, and which its unrivalled importance demands.

If books and systems be multiplied a thousand fold (whatever be their merits) they are to be estimated solely by their social result, the amount of social good they effect, the quantum of social evil they remove; and this test of utility, is the true measure and criterion of their worth. By earlier writers, the main stress was laid on modes and systems of discipline, while those of later date, have taken up the question chiefly with reference to its efficacy, as a measure of national policy; and in either view, so much to the purpose has been advanced, that little can remain to be added that is at once novel and useful. The professed object of all has been, to make men wiser and better, and consequently happier, by refining and elevating the human character, and opening all the purer springs of rational enjoyment;—but, who will contend that this has been done, when those who have the best means of knowing, unhesitatingly assert the contrary? The most intelligent portion of the public press—men, beneath whose eye the panoramic scene of life, with all that passes on the great social arena, are hourly passing—broadly affirm, that nothing has been done; comparatively little perhaps, (in a moral view;) but it is fair to admit, that the quantum of present evil might and doubtless would have been much greater, had its co-operation been wholly suspended.

Every community, in every age, has its distinguishing features, with some evils peculiar to itself; and these social defects it should be the first business of Education to rectify, by shaping its provisions to the moral exigencies of the times. The futility of half measures, has been abundantly tested by the past; though it is a censure that by no means fairly applies to the present.

Public and private sympathy, it is true, has often been appealed to, and as often been partially called forth; but for the present age was reserved the distinction of nobly grasping the question in all its magnitude, and of discriminating aright between the plausible and the sound in theory, by bringing it at once to the proof of a true practical test. All thinking men, of late, rulers as well as the governed, as if newly awakened to a sense of its importance, have been led to co-operate; and, overlooking minor differences, to make common cause in furtherance of the grand objects of education. Hence, the brightest emanations of intelligence, blending and harmonizing with the best and kindliest social elements, are now happily progressing together, and tending toward the main object in view, as their common focus and centre of good; nor will (it may be hoped) the generous enthusiasm subside, till its well-directed efforts be crowned with success. Even since the announcement of this volume, popular theory has busily advanced to a broad experiment in the establishment of "The Central Society," under the highest auspices, and for the express purpose of National Education.

As if by common consent, public men and lecturers,

societies and books have, of late, treated the subject almost exclusively with reference to national systems; and as, in the present work, (saving the few following remarks) no mention is made of popular plans, it may seem consistent with candour, for the Author to assign a reason for such reserve. In briefly doing so, he will observe, first, that it is not from any strong disapproval of such a measure, or that he deems it of little import or wholly impracticable; neither is it meant to imply that entire acquiescence which is based on a conviction of the necessity for a national system, and a belief that the wisdom which planned and conducts the movements of the Central Society, is such as must ensure its success.

On the merits and expediency of public plans he presumes not to determine—he has not made them his study; for which reason, perhaps, he does not see the pressing urgency for adopting them. In the view he has taken of the subject, it was not needful to discuss the formal details of plans, nor to weigh the merits of systems, even had not these questions been so fully discussed by others who have given their whole time and attention to them. He could perhaps have wished, in common with many, that it had not been deemed necessary to coerce men in a matter wherein interest, duty, and common sense so plainly direct them, and which may tend, in some cases, to weaken the sacred ties of parental obligation.

"To climb steep hills," says the ancient adage, "requires slow pace at first;" and the Author, for one, may have thought with Bacon, that it were better "to begin

with the calf, ere attempting to carry the ox," viz., in testing a measure of such import as a national plan, to limit it, for a stated time, to a certain county, or to such a selected portion of the kingdom as might present the fairest field for trial: success on a smaller scale would be a guarantee of its efficacy on a larger; for, to widen the sphere of operation in a novel and vast undertaking, is but to multiply untried obstacles; whereas, after having encountered and well mastered a part, we are prepared to grapple successfully with the whole.

The present may be deemed rather a critical juncture for attempting so wide an innovation on old custom, with its quota of prejudice, and long-cherished prepossessions, from which, with the unsettled temperature of the time, it is likely to encounter many a rough blast. By glancing at the mixed nature of education, for some centuries past, we may in part account for the endless diversity of English character. Society has been so broken up into parties, from political and religious collisions, that the social atmosphere has been, at times, convulsed with the struggle of conflicting elements. So strongly and variously has the lion-like vigour of the British spirit been excited, that the liberty of the subject has at times, shot forth into a daring and reckless license. This has indeed settled down into a seeming quiescence, but on which it were not prudent, perhaps, to presume too much, or place too fond reliance. When, therefore, the success of a popular system in Prussia, or elsewhere, is adduced as a proof of its fitness for any class of Englishmen, the urging of so weak a plea would go far to betray the cause it is meant to advocate, had it not other and better support.

The (morally) mechanical mass of the Prussian population presents, in its social and political structure, a comparatively passive engine, and a direct contrast to the great class of British operatives, who are commonly as aspiring in mind as humble in station, and, in their own opinion, are wise enough to mend the laws they are bound to observe, nor think themselves the less qualified to command, because born to obey.

Of the difficulty and deep responsibility of their position, the able and intelligent men most interested in its success are doubtless apprised, and prepared so to meet as to prove their fitness for the high commission. With a moral courage befitting so bold a design, they seem to have fearlessly resolved to face all obstacles; and should the success be commensurate with its magnitude, their well-earned meed will be a nation's thanks, while its failure will at least help to solve a problem of no small national import. But this great measure involves grave responsibilities, assuming as it does the power of "intertwining itself with the institutions of the country, and of moulding the youth and forming the manhood of other and distant ages." Well does it behove those who sanction as well as those who guide its movements, to be mindful that in their hands these may prove the main springs of national weal or woe, and shape the future destinies of England. If it be meant to survive many generations, it cannot be too liberal in its views, and developement of broad social principle, but with a zealous and watchful heed to the Christian interests of this great Protestant empire. To give stability to any measure, men must be won to a conviction of its wisdom—and

the motto, spirit, and character, of such a system will be "conciliation," for it is idle to talk of plans for the people, unless the people are won to a hearty co-operation; nor should it ever be forgotten, that reforming systems for the lower orders require to be sustained by the reforming example of the higher.

There is a moral power, a social influence, far mightier than of systems. In applying the term influential to the different orders of society, the inheritors of wealth, rank, and official station may, collectively, be called a most influential class; and, doubtless, did these, with the bishop in his diocese, the pastor in his parish, magistrates and heads of establishments, with the many professedly engaged in education,—did all these in their several spheres, aided by the lecturer and the press, labour to further its interests, and to awaken the parental mind to a lively sense of Christian obligation, it would be so good 'a national system' that 'formal plans' would be but sinecures; between the social extremes of the higher and lower lie the middle classes, truly, and in the strongest sense, influential, including by far the greater proportion of the population, wealth, intelligence, and moral strength of the nation. Of these also, there is a large class but one remove above the reach of national systems; these are to be won, for they may not be coerced; but if they be not won, systems will labour in vain, for their wide influence and example is hourly pressing on the class below, as is that of the next above on them, for though silent and unnoted, yet of certain and ceaseless operation is the influence of every class on that immediately below.

Of little use is it to fortify the citadel, if we neglect to secure the out-posts and the passes. The example of all being necessary to the great end in view, the great object of education must be to win all. As a labourer in the same vineyard, though taking the higher ground, and having the same great interests and ulterior object in view, but advancing from an opposite point, he widely differs from those who assume that the main seat of moral disorder lies in the defective education of the lowest class,—deeming that as the springs which feed the broadest rivers rise in the loftiest mountains, and widen as they descend to the ocean, so the streams of social good will still rapidly spread and flow with example, through the community, from the higher classes downward in an ever increasing ratio.

To those who are in such a sense or in anywise influential, the Author's pages are addressed. His object has not been to analyze the merits of particular systems, still less to determine the eligibility of national plans: rather leaving these beaten tracks, he gladly avails himself of the broad and philosophic ground that lies between, and which to him appears to be the arena of true interest. In this its widest social view, with its branchings and details, its remoter bearings and consequences, it presents, perhaps, the most extensive field that human reason can explore, and replete with speculation the most exalted, in character as in utility. Of the present treatise, a primary object has been to trace the social evils of the times to their true domestic sources; its ulterior design being to prove that the permanent moral amelioration of the subordinate classes

must be preceded by the edifying example of the higher, and that the careful and Christian training of youth of the influential orders is the first necessary step towards the moral elevation of the working population.

If to the "matter of fact" man the repeated stress he has laid on religious considerations appear to be in some degree unphilosophical, his sufficient plea is the motive, viz. a conviction that a spirit of levity and irreligion is a main source of all social mischiefs, and that the superior and constraining motives deducible from Christian truth are its proper and sole effectual corrective: hence, also, in style and matter, his work assumes much of a contemplative character; but if he has often diverged from the formal line of logical precision, he has (not without reason perhaps) deemed it prudent to consult the tastes of those most likely to form a prominent class of his readers. To plead the more effectually with the parental heart—and to win the acquiescence of that most interesting and influential class, "the fair mothers of our isle," (on whom as to earlier and abiding impressions so much depends,) as well as to give all the attraction in his power to a much hackneyed but all-important theme, he has given the rein to contemplative thought, and freely decked his composition with such graces of figurative language as might consistently harmonize with and serve to illustrate a subject so lofty in its character, and so extensive in its application. In this liberty he has but followed the counsel of Longinus, the reputed father and oracle of criticism, who maintained that good thoughts could not be too well dressed, and that there is as much difference in an idea presented to the mind, through the medium of dignified and of com-

simple-phrase language, as in beholding an object by the light of the sun, or the glimmering of a taper.

From the tenor of the foregoing observations, the reader will perceive that this "address" is of recent date, and may infer from them the author's motives for this addition to his work, which having now been some months in circulation, has enabled him to collate the opinions of the public press,* as to its "merits and character," which, for the reader's satisfaction, he has now appended to the volume.

To the reviewers his best acknowledgements are due for their careful and candid criticism of his humble performance, as well as for the handsome terms in which they have been pleased to express their commendations.

* The "critical notices" are placed at the end of the Volume.

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INTRODUCTION.

To train aright the human mind, as it is the noblest and worthiest of rational objects, so is it one of the strongest indications of political, as well as of parental wisdom; while to the Christian, who is in earnest about "the things of the future," it stands alone, as it were, in its unrivalled importance. To the philosophic observer of the signs and social movements "of the times," it presents a bright and cheering evidence of the good taste of the age, and the high moral tone of popular feeling, that while so many questions of stirring interest, with so much that is novel and striking in science and art, are hourly pressing on the public attention, the urgent and weighty appeal of Education should have so won the hearts and suffrages of men, as not only to have ranked the highest in estimation, but also, as by common consent, to have taken the lead among the engrossing topics of the day.

Education, as it involves the best interests of humanity, must, at all times, have a powerful claim to consideration, and its appeal will always find a response and an advocate in every mind that can appreciate its worth; but the Author rests his claim

to attention less on the high degree of interest which the subject is so well fitted to inspire, or on the professional experience of thirty years, added to study, and that cordial interest which long and familiar intercourse with youth rarely fails to excite, than on a conviction of the ill tendency of existing errors, which it equally behoves parents, preceptors, and every Christian to assist in eradicating, as also of the extensive amount of good thus to be effected; and, finally, on its growing importance in the public estimation, in consequence of those exciting events which, of late years, have conspired to turn the attention of the intelligent of all classes towards Education, as the great remedy for those social and national evils which have at times assumed so threatening a form, as to render it needless to preface, by apology, any appeal to the good sense of the community on a theme of such vital interest.

Of all the subjects that can engage the mind of man, there are few that may compete with Education in importance, none that more imperatively claim his serious consideration; in its highest and best sense, which is its true and proper acceptation, involving the dearest hopes of mankind as rational and responsible beings. Taking a fair estimate of life, and making a due provision for all that is truly desirable in it, its view is then extended beyond the limits of time: rising above the present transitory scene, Education discerns and weighs the future destiny of man, and, keeping her exalted end in view, steadily perseveres in the use of all those means which

may best insure its ultimate attainment. As on such a theme, every degree of excitement, when rightly improved, becomes profitable, it is hoped that the present appeal to the hearts and understandings of all who are interested in the welfare of the rising generation, will neither be deemed inappropriate, nor wholly fail of its desired object; viz., a tendency to subserve the great ends of Education, and the best interests of society.

Not only is this a subject, above all others, calculated to awaken the most powerful sympathies in the parental breast: with equal force and propriety it addresses itself to every class. Its unlimited operation is closely interwoven with every part of the great social system, imparting a tone and vigour to the whole; and the more we extend and vary our views of Education, the stronger will be our conviction of its high worth and importance, not only as the efficient remedy for existing evils, but also as the proper and appointed means of attaining all that we most deservedly prize as men, and as members of one great Christian community.

Apathy, or even indifference, on such a subject, would argue an extreme of folly, that could emanate only from gross and culpable ignorance; and scarcely can we point to any age or nation so barbarous as to have been wholly insensible to its claims, or so deaf to the voice of reason, as not to acknowledge them. Increased attention to Education has, indeed, ever kept pace with the progress of civilization; nor can we gather a surer indication of growing refinement

and good policy in any people, than in the superior care they have manifested in the training of their youth. In later and more enlightened times, and in our own favoured land especially, Education has elicited from the pen of the moralist, the philosopher, and the divine, much valuable information, bearing the character of general utility; but probably much more that was peculiarly suited to the exigencies of the times in which they lived, as being obviously and necessarily designed to remedy such errors and deficiencies as were then most prevalent. In addition to the honoured names of Locke and Milton, a respectable list might be adduced, whose acknowledged abilities sufficed to give a sanction to their sentiments, and who rightly judged it to be a subject worthy of their maturest consideration. The records of their treasured experience are fraught with sage counsel and salutary maxims, affording a rich field to be gleaned at will, by all whose laudable curiosity may lead them into speculations so rational in their nature, and of such manifest utility.

But, notwithstanding the accession of light thus derived from a series of writers, their very number, while it bears testimony to the importance of the subject, supplies also a strong presumption that each, in succession, deemed it to have been imperfectly or partially viewed by those who had preceded; for, when many writers follow on the same subject, it is manifest that all, in turn, are actuated by some conviction of error in those who had gone before, and each anticipates the palm of honour for superior pe-

netration in discovering and making known the great desiderata in Education, which, though long the object of research, had never been fully revealed. But, after all that has been thus given to the world, Education, as to its moral results, seems to have done but little, retaining, in this respect, nearly its ancient position; as the guardian of public and private virtue, its past and present efficacy is at least questionable; and so long as its objectionable features continue unchanged, the leading question must remain the same. The immediate point of interest therefore, is, not what has been said or done, but what more, to the present purpose, can be said, and what has been left undone; it is with present practice, rather than with past theories, that we have to do; not what has heretofore been amended, but what are the existing evils, and how may they best be remedied.

Education is an inexhaustible theme, and were it not so in itself, the progressive changes in human society and manners would probably render it so; originating in, and acting upon, the mutable and restless genius of man, which, the higher it mounts, ever aspires the more; creating a demand for corresponding changes in the matter and mode of instruction, adapted to its enlarged and prospective views. The growth of fresh errors must also be arrested, which, in endless variety, are always springing up anew, making it expedient to revise its operation from time to time, and if not to vary its essential forms, at least to renew and confirm its beneficial powers by well-timed provisions. The great and good Locke,

who would willingly have made us a nation of philosophers, is, perhaps, as little chargeable with inconsistency as most men; yet few will maintain that a treatise, penned a century ago, is in all respects adapted to present use, or that his Spartan precepts, for the management of children, and for promoting a vigorous and healthful frame of body (which in those times of comparative simplicity were rarely, if ever, adopted), are likely to find practical advocates among the more sensitive and tender mothers of the present era of studied luxury and refinement.

Though it be true that Education has seldom wanted advocates, certain it is, that it can never have too many able ones; its exhaustless interest gives it a never-ceasing claim to attention; it should therefore be held up to view in every varied form, and arrayed with every attraction of which it is susceptible, to render it the more inviting, and to give it the greater effect. While works of fiction abound, and new fields of imagination are daily opened and explored with avidity, not many, comparatively, are those which bear the stamp of decided utility; but it would be a libel on the good taste of the age to infer, that because the former find at all times a ready welcome, the latter should at any time lack an equally cordial reception. Rarely indeed, it may be presumed, in an age like the present (distinguished alike for just discrimination and impartiality), will any well-grounded appeal to the British public be made in vain, or fail to elicit attention in a degree proportioned to its just claims and merits.

True it is, that in the popular journals and periodicals of the day, not a few of which stand deservedly high in the public estimation, much valuable information may be gleaned by such as avail themselves of the opportunity of profiting by such authorities. Some have even devoted their pages exclusively to the interests of Education, and to the details of its progress and results. That such praiseworthy efforts should have produced so little apparent effect, can be accounted for only by inferring that their circulation has by no means kept pace with their merits. There is, perhaps, scarcely a periodical of note, but in turn has taken up this most interesting subject; yet it would seem, that, because the information treasured up in these literary storehouses is necessarily interspersed amongst a variety of attractive subjects, it fails of eliciting due attention, or may possibly lose its effect for want of being condensed in that regular form, without which the best information is by some regarded rather as a cursory view, than a standard of fixed authority: hence such strictures, how excellent soever, attract often but a partial notice, floating awhile, perhaps, on the stream of popularity, and then sinking into unmerited oblivion, which is, not unfrequently, the fate of the best miscellanies when their date has expired.

There seems to be less want of general and practical knowledge, than of the means of making it available in its application. This is now the great point, and the main difficulty arises from local peculiarities. The system that works well in one

community, will rarely succeed in another without attention to this, which renders it expedient and necessary, in its adaptation, to make due allowance and provision for all such local and national characteristics. Of practical matter there is sufficient before the public. The present is a humble attempt to go further, to depict the extent of its influence, to follow out its manifold bearings and details, and to trace existing evils to their domestic sources. The rooting out of error is, in all things, the first necessary step towards perfection; and the passive sanction of seemingly small defects in Education, resembles that too lenient policy, which, by tolerating incipient error, and allowing it to strike root, is subsequently constrained to witness the gigantic growth of mischiefs, with which it is then doomed, perhaps, in vain to struggle.

There is, perhaps, no subject of equal magnitude on which public opinion has been more divided, than on Education; but it may be fairly assumed, that amid this variety of conflicting sentiments, those should seem to merit a prior claim to attention, which have been derived from long experimental intercourse with youth, combined with repeated observation and study of the gradually unfolding character: he that would rightly appreciate it, must familiarize himself with it; he must descend to its views, and enter into its feelings, and, by so doing, will not fail to discover those endearing qualities, which need but to be fostered in order to produce their kindly and abundant harvest. When, therefore, we look around, and mark

the striking indications of juvenile levity now so prevalent, it will be well, perhaps, if, instead of charging nature with the defect, we place it, with better reason, to the account of a faulty Education, whose errors and omissions doubtless are, and ever have been, one of the main sources of human folly, crime, and misery.

For proof of error in modern Education, we need not go far; it is too glaring to elude even common observation, every where surrounding us, and meeting us in our daily walks. By its fruits it is known—by its visible effects in the current manners of the day, which make it but too apparent that a self-willed and precocious spirit is fast gaining ground in the youthful breast, and making rapid strides towards a fatal ascendancy, from the highest even to the lowest classes of the community. In the humbler walks of life, often are we shocked at the forbidding forms which youthful depravity assumes; and as we ascend in the social scale towards the more enlightened and opulent circles, commanding every possible advantage, and where we reasonably expect to find the salutary effects of Education in a proportionably higher ratio, there also the evil seemingly preponderates; and we are constrained to resign the brightness of anticipation for a conviction of the discouraging reverse.

The growth of juvenile delinquency is, perhaps, one of the darkest signs of the times, imperatively calling for increased vigilance in the training of youth of all ranks. Never, probably, had Education greater obstacles to contend with, notwithstanding all that

has seemingly been done; never did parental responsibility assume a sterner aspect; never was paternal wisdom more forcibly appealed to, urging all who have the power to combine their laudable efforts, promptly to remedy its obvious defects.

It is doubtless easier to prove that error exists, than precisely to determine its amount and position, or whether the fault rests chiefly with parents or teachers, or whether it is to be ascribed rather to injudicious or ill-conducted systems. Alternately each comes in for a share of the blame, and in some cases all are perhaps chargeable with failure, in a greater or less degree; but each is willing to exonerate itself from the censure, and the judgment being commonly biased by circumstances rather than conviction, is at a loss where to attach the omission, which is then (conveniently enough) ascribed to the fault of nature.

Among the probable causes of such manifest deficiency, the ruling taste for economising may be enumerated, which, with more zeal than prudence, has been so largely carried into modern plans of Education. A little reflection may suffice to shew, that, when carried to an extreme, its tendency is decidedly mischievous, and there can be but little question that its operation has been highly injurious to society at large. The very term, cheap, implies inferiority; and when applied to Education (including, of course, every thing connected with it) is, if well weighed, a very significant hint not to raise the expectations too high. Cheap schools imply cheap teachers, yielding but slender security for the essentials of mental and

moral qualification; men of ability are not thus cheaply to be obtained; none but those who are constrained by necessity can be willing, for a trifling remuneration, to undertake the monotonous and often irksome round of subordinate school duties.

Exceptions there are in most cases; and when the parental means are inadequate to the expense of a liberal education, all that can be done is to make the wisest arrangement that circumstances permit; but where no such impediment exists, indifference on this point may be productive of the worst consequences, and frustrate the parents' hopes in a point where failure is fatal, and where no remedy remains. That the various benefits which the best Education can confer, should be brought within the means and reach of all, is of all things the most desirable; but till such is the case, the wisdom of economising in so important a matter must be questionable.

It is but fair to concede, that in some cases even cheap Education may be good, but if so, it is more than can reasonably be expected; and if it be not good, all parties must suffer. The child, whose best interests are thus compromised, is the chief sufferer. The parent suffers through the child, in disappointed hopes, embittered by a feeling of responsibility; and the third party, who has (naturally enough) endeavoured to make the best of a hard bargain, is probably a sufferer in reputation, if not (as it sometimes happens) through the humbler medium of the pocket. Even admitting the common advantages of instruction to be on a level, many a promising child has been

spoiled and ruined by being brought into immediate contact and association with incipient vulgarity in all its forms; one certain result of undue parsimony in Education being to plunge a child into society with a mixed assemblage, perhaps of the very lowest order, whence quickly arise low habits and connections, with a vulgar turn of thought; and hence that individual is stamped for a low character through life, who, with superior advantages, might have been an ornament and blessing to society.

But manifest as it is, that in nothing is a rigid economy so ill-timed as in Education, it has obtained to such an extent, that it is now no very uncommon thing for rival candidates for patronage to found their claim to support on the lowness of their terms. This state of things is of some standing, though to less extent than at present, and has been the subject of frequent and just animadversion; and hence, also, the profession of a teacher, anciently so much respected, has sunk to the level of insignificance, nay, in too many instances, has even dwindled into contempt; but this is surely as unwise as it is ungenerous, and cannot fail of operating in a manner equally injurious to the pupil and to the preceptor. Its direct tendency is to lessen, in the pupil's breast, that sentiment of respect, which can alone give weight to instruction; and with the teacher, its effect will be to diminish his care and exertion, in proportion as he becomes conscious of his slender authority and influence, which must greatly abate his self-confidence, even should it not lessen his self-estimation.

Among all the promoters of Education, to none is the palm so justly due, as to him who conscientiously discharges the self-denying duties it imposes; who, to the daily sacrifice of his liberty, adds his unremitted exertions, and without whose needful agency, the best intentions of its cordial friends and advocates would be unavailing. To their teachers youth daily and hourly look up for the light of information and example; they should therefore possess sufficient personal merit to elicit esteem, and such a measure of authority as may ensure attention: between them there exists a continued and unreserved intercourse, which renders it essential to the best interests of Education that a spirit of harmony and friendship be inviolably preserved; and it is strictly consonant with the plainest reason, that they to whom so high a trust has been confided, ought invariably to be treated with corresponding respect.

None surely would withhold from Education or its professors so humble a meed of honour, were they fully aware of the continued mental exactions by which it is purchased. Of all professions it is, perhaps, the most trying, nor will even habit suffice to make it agreeable, unless sustained by no small degree of urbanity and forbearance, blended with a sincere regard for youth. He who is in quest of a sinecure, must seek it elsewhere; neither will ambition here find the road to worldly distinction; and avarice must turn to the right hand or to the left. The preceptor must be content to find his chief reward in the acknowledgments of a limited circle, and

in the satisfaction of conscious rectitude. He who has no cause to be proud of his motives, will have little reason to pride himself upon his profession. In addition to its ordinary duties, which supply ample exercise for the virtue of forbearance, the teacher's path is often rugged, and thickset with trials peculiar to the profession. Misunderstandings arise from causes oft as trivial as they are absurd; from trifling jealousies, from rivalry, and petty collisions among pupils, and sometimes from disgust at reproof or correction; hence resentment is engendered in the youthful breast; and when the wounded feelings of the parent become a party in the cause, rarely will the unwelcome excitement be allayed, till the preceptor has, in some shape, been made sensible of its effects. In cases wherein their own children are concerned, indulgent parents are not easily convinced, and the only course to be adopted is a stedfast adherence to the line of duty, with a stoical indifference to consequences; this will always bear a man through with honour, though it may not invariably crown him with success.

These are the thorns and briars of the profession, nor are they depicted with a view to discourage the passenger, but to warn him of a little rough ground that lies in his way; and to the indulgent parent it is respectfully designed to intimate how smooth and pleasant it is in their power to render it, by making natural partiality yield a little to more disinterested motives, in behalf of those to whom the care and mental guardianship of their offspring have been

confided. But whatever may be the ascendancy of parental affection in some minds, rarely does it attain to an unjust extreme; such a measure of mistaken fondness forms by no means a common feature in the character of British parents, who are not excelled, if equalled, by those of any other nation for justness of sentiment, and propriety of conduct in all their domestic relations. In venturing, therefore, upon the language of expostulation, the Author is desirous that it may not be misconstrued; truth is his main object, and wherever his reasonings may yield conviction, he would hope that utility may follow.

Having long devoted his best energies to the service of youth, it is with sincere pleasure that, by this free-will offering, (the first-fruits of his leisure, though not matured without care and study,) he is enabled to give an additional proof of undiminished zeal in the cause which he has the honour to advocate.

Touching his allusion to existing errors, as an imperfect and mutilated exposition of his views might prematurely tend rather to alienate than conciliate those who incline to favour particular theories; it were better that they should be gathered from the work itself. It may here suffice to state, that he is no convert to new systems; his opinions are his own, and will be found in unison with his declared sentiments of the longest date. On the subject of ancient literature, and the years often fruitlessly consumed in the study of the dead languages, time, so far from changing his convictions, has set the seal to their identity, and added to their weight and character:

to his consistency, therefore, on this point, some of his readers will bear testimony.

On the question of religion, as associated with Education, there will rarely exist much difference of opinion among sincere Christians, as to the propriety and sound wisdom of making its powerful motives the ground and framework of the moral and social obligations. To the benign and quickening influences of true religion all are ready to subscribe, and yet, from the very inefficient manner in which its benevolent spirit is commonly inculcated, and the apparently slender stress laid upon it in some of our modern systems, it would seem rather to be regarded as a matter of very secondary import, than as a leading and essential feature in the education of youth of the middle and higher classes, amongst whom its influence is more especially needful and important. To omissions of this class doubtless we may look, if not for the principal root of error, at least for one of its main branches, and productive, probably, of the most pernicious fruits.

In the second Essay, more particularly addressed to parents, some of the opinions advanced may savour rather of novelty, but as they are the fruit of study and observation, they will perhaps gain rather than lose by the scrutiny they invite; and should his sentiments at any time assume the language of confidence, the candid reader will, he trusts, impute it rather to a well-meant zeal in the cause he advocates, than to an egotistic or self-sufficient spirit. Having conducted, on his account, an establishment during

fourteen years, averaging above fifty pupils, it will be conceded that he is less indebted to theory than practice for his convictions: impressed with serious views of life, it was always his primary care to form and strengthen the moral and religious principle as the safest and truest basis of character; and to this endeavour he chiefly ascribes the success and approbation that rewarded his efforts. It were, indeed, hardly consistent with right reason, to suppose that any system should be more satisfactory than that which, in the common course of things, tends to conciliate the respect both of parents and of pupils, and to the beneficial operation of which, the writer, for one, can testify having repeatedly had the satisfaction of witnessing its salutary effects in the good conduct and consequent success in life, of many who had been thus tutored; and, doubtless, every preceptor of youth who has made the cause of truth and virtue his first care, has also, by the event, been convinced of the wisdom of his decision.

To profess to do full justice to such a theme in the present advanced state of society, and in all its complicated bearings, would be an assumption of superior intelligence, that would ill become the author of these Essays; but, conscious as he may be of his own weak merits, he trusts, that right motives will atone for casual defects; and though he may not bring to his subject an unerring judgment, he would approach it in a straightforward spirit of impartiality, encouraged in his arduous but honourable task, by a conviction of the good always to be effected by renewing the

attention, and stimulating afresh the laudable efforts of the powerful and the wealthy, on whose fostering aid and co-operation, success in this, as in every useful design, chiefly depends. Should he succeed but in imparting additional interest to the leading features and details of his subject, by setting them in a stronger or more varied light, he will not have cause to regret the loss of time, or the misapplication of talent.

To persuade is but the means; to profit is the end. Every work is justly estimated by its tendency, and its best character and strongest recommendation is utility; but this choice fruit is of most uncertain growth, depending not so much on the degree of intrinsic merit any work may possess, as on its use and application by others. Many a treatise, designed to be practical, shares the fate of a theory—it is read, approved, perhaps, and then laid aside, where its feeble call is unheeded amid the thousand daily claims on the attention; but, without its practical application, the best theory is but as reflected light, destitute of vital heat, and unproductive; and thus, for want of its practical use, has many an elaborate production of genius been lost to the world as to its intended and beneficial results. With many pains, conviction is brought forth to the doubtful existence of an hour; the day that dawns on its brightest birth, oft closes not till it has been buried in oblivion. Little, however, does it avail to search for the weeds of error, if, when discovered, they be not rooted out to make room for the salutary growth of truth.

Utility is the design of the following pages, and,

in commending the fruit of his studies to the consideration of all who are interested in the welfare of youth, he doubts not but that it will be appreciated with the impartiality the subject deserves. The patronage he would elicit is that which centres in a cordial approval of its design and tendency. In the truly enlightened mind, Charity ever stands at the right hand of Judgment, extending her willing co-operation to every laudable purpose. The approbation of such is an ample and honourable reward; but he that would gain it, must approach the heart by the understanding, and his surest passport will be a worthy and beneficial object.

The reader will readily discern the contemplative character of the work before him, in the spirit and style that pervades it, and which has been adopted as most congenial with the serious and elevated view the author has taken of the subject. For a similar reason, he preferred essays to lectures, as being the least formal medium for giving publicity to his opinions, and as better suited to that freedom of style, which forms, perhaps, the best channel for the unreserved flow of sentiment and feeling.

In conclusion, he will be content if the reader, while accompanying him in his researches, will gather such fruit as he may find worth taking, and store it for use; and may the Author of all good, in whose hand the weakest instruments become available for the highest purposes, further, by His divine concurrence, an imperfect but sincere endeavour to promote his gracious design, whose supreme will it is, that all

his rational creatures should participate in his perfection and felicity. May every parent and guardian of youth, while seeking to so humble a source for information, realize all the benefit that its most judicious application can bestow. May they, in addition to the satisfaction of an approving conscience in the right discharge of their sacred trust, enjoy the pleasure that is most grateful to the parental heart, in seeing their offspring at once dutiful and happy, and their virtues increasing with their years.

IMPORTANCE

OF

EDUCATION.

ESSAY I.

EDUCATION—ITS IMPORTANCE DEDUCED—FROM THE NATURE, RELATIONS, AND PROSPECTS OF A HUMAN SOUL, AS CONNECTED WITH THE MOTIVES AND OBLIGATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY—FROM ITS MANIFEST INDIVIDUAL ADVANTAGES, AND DIRECT INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL ORDER, VIRTUE, AND HAPPINESS—POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF RIGHTLY FORMING THE YOUTHFUL CHARACTER—ITS INFLUENCE ON NATIONAL CHARACTER, PROSPERITY, &c.

To every intelligent and reflecting mind, so evident is the importance of Education, that any attempt to prove its necessity by argument, might well be deemed superfluous, did all avail themselves of the knowledge within their reach, and did they possess the requisite leisure and judgment rightly to improve and apply it. It is, indeed, one of the few great truths which have been sanctioned by the unanimous consent of mankind in every age, and we should be disposed even to question the sanity of the individual deliberately professing a contrary opinion. But the admission of this truth, so far from superseding the expediency of reviewing a subject, at all times so interesting, will rather stimulate the judicious to investigate it for themselves, and thus, by the aid of reason, dissect anew the root of a sentiment, doubtless as just, as it is universally prevalent; for, in questions of general import, though all

mankind may agree as one, in voice and opinion, yet, in the eye of judgment, they must ever comprise two distinct classes, the considerate and the unthinking; and in her scale, the preponderance belongs as exclusively to the former, as numerical superiority does to the latter.

Between these two classes of mankind there will always be this difference, that while the latter are content to be unresistingly borne along by the broad current of popular influence, because sanctioned by custom, the former, though willing to admit the due weight of evidence thus derived, will yet, in questions of vital interest, assume the right of thinking for themselves, with the nobler few, whose prerogative it is to build their opinions on the rock of conviction alone; the only sure foundation of reason, and proof against the innovating hand of Time, whence the mind, as from her tower of strength, looks calmly down upon the conflicting waves of doubt and uncertainty below.

Among the many attractive fields of elegant and useful research that lie open to the inquiring portion of the intellectual world, rich and varied are the sources of utility and pleasure; and the mind, while exploring them in quest of information, is animated and strengthened by so congenial an exercise of her powers; fading impressions are renewed, and the nearly obliterated steps of evidence retraced, by which he formerly gained the vantage-ground of Truth, yielding a purer atmosphere, and commanding a wider horizon: by such mental excursions a healthful and vigorous tone is imparted to the intellect, and the higher the interest and authority that call for them, the oftener should they be repeated; for so is man constituted by nature, that conviction itself is rarely permanent, unless wrought, as it were, into the soul by continued repetition. With travail, often we ascend; we gain, perhaps, the summit, and for awhile enjoy, with contemplative eye, the bright imagery of truth in our awakened perceptions; suddenly comes across some low mist or vapour, which intercepts our

mental view, and the brief vision is no sooner eclipsed, than its fleeting form is forgotten.

Even in sacred things, which are ever the most affecting, how soon are the strongest impressions effaced, and how transient the firmest resolves! Even the solemn warnings of heaven, like the voice of its thunder, is forgotten, as it dies away in the distance; and should the rude hand of Death tear from us our dearest friend, or set his terrors in array against ourselves, yet is he remembered only "as a guest that tarrieth but a day." If it be true, that we are thus prone to forget, the inference is plain, that the consideration of such a subject as Education, involving the interests of all men, and fraught with the most vital consequences to each, can at no time be unseasonable or unprofitable.

There is no subject which involves considerations more affecting to humanity, none fitted to awaken a deeper interest in the heart of a being gifted with the faculties of reason and reflection. As an intellectual engine of superhuman power, Education is mighty to achieve either good or evil, shaping the destiny of man in time and in eternity, and influencing his virtue and his happiness in every stage of his existence, and in every step of its progress; but though the claims of Education are thus imperative, and its obligations so universally binding, as to be weakened by no change of time or circumstance, yet the social aspect of the times may be such as greatly to enhance their weight and authority; and such, confessedly, is the present era, in which Education assumes a degree of importance, far surpassing that of any preceding period.

It is not possible, perhaps, by any combination of language, adequately to define Education; yet the simplest definition that can be given, is sufficient to impress every thinking mind with an indelible conviction of its magnitude and importance: much ingenuity has been employed to define it aright, but the difficulty of thus doing full justice to it, obviously arises from its complicated nature, doubtful operation, and uncertain

effects. Were Education a system of arbitrary impressions; were the mind wholly a passive principle, and the will always an obedient agent, the results of Education might be accurately determined, and its definition would be easy; but as the very reverse of this is sometimes the case, such attempts, how ingenious soever, can only be received conditionally: that many favourable coincidences are essential to success, is obvious, from instances of failure; but though the power of Education is seemingly abridged by such casual miscarriages, they, in fact, augment its importance, by more strongly evincing the necessity for increased vigilance to prevent their recurrence.

Nor will exceptions of this kind ever weigh materially against the unerring testimony of experience, by which the power of Education has, in every age and nation, been sufficiently attested, so that not only its beneficial agency is universally admitted, but its known efficacy is such as to warrant, at least, general conclusions as to its probable results; and the advocates of Education may rest satisfied, that it now possesses all the requisite means for influencing the youthful mind, and directing its aspirations aright. As the great agent of virtue, its operation is universal, and may be rendered available for all the rational purposes of life, whether social, religious, or political.

Education means a right discipline, and implies that exercise of the mind whereby its powers are led progressively towards perfection; and that which it is able to effect affords a sufficient criterion of its high worth and importance. As a profession, Education is entitled to an elevated rank; in utility and importance, it is surpassed by none; therefore, in degree, it is inferior to none; but the honour of its distinction consists in its power and privilege of moulding the human mind and character at will. As the vehicle of science, it is estimable; as the means of wisdom and happiness, it is inestimable: it comprises all that is essential and becoming; whatever can expand and ennoble the mind, or purify the heart, with the readiest

means of imparting all desirable knowledge, with the love of virtue, and an abhorrence of vice.

The proper business of Education is to elicit and mature the mental faculties; to foster every sentiment of moral rectitude, and every seed of social virtue; to form the temper, and regulate the habits; and, by storing the mind with needful and available knowledge, to qualify the individual for his future station in society; above all, to implant in his breast the principles of a rational piety, sustained by the ennobling truths of revelation; briefly, in other words, to impress the youthful mind with such a sense of duty towards God and man, as may produce a corresponding course of life, whose steady current may resemble the clear stream that "goes rejoicing on its way, and whose tranquil bosom distorts not the objects that it reflects in its passage." Education is but, as it were, the sowing of the seed; what the increase may be, defeats the powers of calculation. In this mental harvest none would reap sparingly, nor is any motive wanting, that wisdom can suggest, to induce all to sow liberally in these bright fields of hope and promise.

Important as Education manifestly is in every point of view, and in all its bearings, moral and social, yet, as connected with the weighty interests of religion, and as the means of imparting the knowledge of Divine truth, and of inculcating the sublime spirit of Christianity, it possesses claims which must ever be paramount to all other considerations. Nor will there be much need of human eloquence to enforce this with the enlightened Christian, who has the heavenly oracles for his guidance, and on whose heart this truth has been engraven by the finger of Deity. There should seem to be little call for the feeble aid of reason here, or that human wisdom should weary itself in a formal round of argument to prove that which has so little serious opposition to encounter.

A few, and those the plainest and most obvious arguments, grounded on the weighty and affecting motives of religion,

may amply suffice for the present purpose, and, combined with the reflections they suggest, supply abundant matter for evidence on this point. Such are the reasons that may be deduced from the nature, relations, and prospects, of the human soul, endued with progressive capacity, subject, in this mixed and transitory state, to trials for the exercise and probation of virtue, and destined for a state of endless duration, where perfect happiness will be the reward of talents rightly improved; and where also remorse and shame await the wilful neglect and wanton abuse of them.

If the familiar maxim be true, that Education forms the mind, then it is evident that its well-being, in time and in eternity, depends chiefly on the manner in which it is formed; and thus its importance appears commensurate with the highest concerns of the soul, which it must necessarily influence throughout the countless ages of eternity. How needful, then, its wise and careful direction, and how desirable its salutary discipline! Of this, little doubt can exist in the mind that contemplates the dangers that beset her path in every stage of her earthly pilgrimage.

That human life is a warfare, is a truth that carries its own evidence, and finds a ready witness in every breast: how then shall the youthful champion be prepared for the encounter? Were he permitted to enter the field naked and defenceless, how shall he stand when the experienced and the mighty often fall? To assign him the station of honour without armour of proof to defend it (which religion alone bestows), would be to place him as a victim at the post of danger, and sacrifice him to almost certain destruction. Without this armour of Divine truth and Christian virtue, how may he withstand the shock of calamities, or repel the shafts of infidelity; how should he resist the allurements of vice, or surmount, with magnanimity, the manifold obstacles that will constantly be rising to check his progress?

That heart must be devoid of common benevolence that

could remain unmoved with sympathy and concern at sight of an amiable but heedless youth in peril of death, from flood, or flame, or precipice, or that would forbear to stretch forth a helping hand to avert, if possible, the catastrophe: doubtless the feelings that break forth into tenderness at the appeal of suffering nature, proclaim that humanity, which is at once the ornament and blessing of society; but, if there be such a thing as consistency, by what criterion are we to estimate the character that promptly sympathizes with the casualties of time, but subsides into apathy and indifference towards the vital concerns of futurity, where error is fatal, and miscarriage irretrievable, and where lasting happiness is at stake? In the estimation of such, the fleeting things of sense seem far to outweigh the evidence of things unseen, though attested by the voice of Omnipotence as infinitely transcending all the powers of created thought and utterance.

In the frequent use of the word Education, I would be understood to mean, rather what it ought to be, in the opinion of the judicious, than what it commonly is in modern practice, or what the term ordinarily implies. In familiar acceptation it has no definite signification, being applied indiscriminately to all those varied systems of restraint, whether beneficial or otherwise, to which the great majority of children are periodically subjected, and which seem frequently to have no higher object than the attainment of those branches of human erudition, which, though of acknowledged utility, should ever be subservient to the solid acquisitions of moral and divine truth, and those fixed principles of rectitude, which are oftentimes seemingly overlooked, as if they scarcely merited serious attention, or needed not the fostering hand of care.

But when the comparatively trifling things of time manifestly engross the first attention, it amounts to a tacit declaration that they hold the leading place in our estimation, notwithstanding professions to the contrary. Hence the indispensable

means of certain and endless good are deferred till we have secured, as we fondly suppose, the accommodations of the present time by those common-place acquirements which absorb the time and faculties of children during their prime, and which have avowedly but a temporal aim. This can hardly be deemed the wisdom befitting a responsible being. If one thing be confessedly needful, and incomparably more so than all other things together, it consists, with the soundest reason, to make it the first acquisition. Human life having no definite term, what is needful to the old, is equally so to the young, and to every intervening age; if it be worldly policy, then it is as short-sighted as it is selfish, and defeats its own end, by forfeiting its claim to the favour of that Divine Being, whose counsel is rejected, and who dispenses alike the blessings of time and eternity.

Dear to heaven must be the youthful heart, a stranger to guile, whose innocence is emblematic of its own spotless purity; but doubly grateful when in such a mind the early dawning of Christian graces sheds a mild lustre over the character, and the light of truth, with gradually rising power, gives promise of a progressively wise and happy course. To render the young well-pleasing to heaven, is doubtless to insure their happiness by the wisest means possible; and if the blessing depend on its favour, the seed of virtue that is soonest sown, may be expected to yield not only the quickest, but most abundant increase. In securing to youth the substantial benefits of a pious Education, as in most acquisitions that are truly estimable, " before honour is humility," and the enjoyment of the desired harvest must be preceded by the pains of cultivation, which should commence with the dawn of reason, and continue till it attain the zenith of its intellectual strength. Need we an infallible guide, the inspired volume reveals to us the counsel of heaven for our direction: safe and salutary are its admonitions, while its plainest dictates bear the impress of a Divine

origin. "Train up the child in the way he should go," is the language of unerring wisdom, and the voice of experience has, in every age, borne witness to its efficacy.

In noticing this familiar and hackneyed precept, it may not be irrelevant to remark, as a peculiar characteristic of the sacred writings, that, although the language of prophecy is inimitably sublime, the didactic is invariably as plain as it is energetic, of which our blessed Redeemer's celebrated discourse on the mount presents a striking illustration; wherein the sum of religion is briefly comprised, the counsels of Eternal Wisdom revealed, and the means of happiness pointed out, in the most familiar terms. The understanding is irresistibly appealed to, through the medium of the senses; while the surrounding objects, birds and flowers, are made to proclaim the watchful care of Providence; and the force and beauty of phrase throughout, is equalled only by its simplicity. Such is the power and privilege of genuine Truth, wherever she appears we must follow her, and seek her in her retreats; she is ever to be respected for her own sake, whatever dress she may assume, and whether she approach us smiling or with frowns, she should still be welcome; her voice is ever the same; her speech is the language of heaven.

As it would ill consist with the dignity and character of the Sovereign Ruler of all to dispense his blessings indiscriminately, the faithful discharge of duty, in the diligent use of the appointed means, is required as the proof of sincerity. The advice of the inspired monarch of Israel, to "train the child aright," is the express condition on which the annexed promise is attainable; if rightly weighed, it implies no less than the early and right formation of character, the miniature of the future man; and, when thus trained, Eternal Truth has declared, that "when he is old he will not leave it." But heaven may not be slighted with impunity; and they who disregard its admonitions, may not consider that, in strong scriptural phrase,

when the gracious terms of its favour are rejected, the promised blessing becomes awfully reversed.

The great Saviour and Benefactor of mankind received, with his wonted benignity, those who brought young children to him, and encouraged them, with marked approbation, in the blessing he pronounced, by his declaration, that "of such is the kingdom of heaven." He pointedly intimates, not only the worth and excellence of those meek and innocent qualities, which are characteristic of that tender age, but also the peculiar fitness of the season of childhood, and its spirit of purity and docility, for the right receiving and retaining the impressions of true religion he came to impart; and experience sets the seal of confirmation to the wisdom of this doctrine, which has found an echo in the witness of every age. The Scriptures throughout breathe the same sentiment; the Proverbs, especially, abound with pithy allusions to the same effect, and calculated to carry conviction home to the parental breast. The wisdom and efficacy of timely restraint, and early religious culture, are pourtrayed in the strongest terms, and crowned with the most encouraging eulogiums; while the error and folly of neglect are depicted in the most pointed and striking language. By the ancient Hebrews, aptly were the Sacred Writings termed "The Law," by way of eminence, as containing the eternal and heavenly rule of right and wrong, and revealing the will and attributes of the Deity. The knowledge of these "lively oracles" was, therefore, esteemed by them as the highest of human acquisitions, and a main part of Education.

Advancing youth brings with it all the requisites for improvement, being unprejudiced and docile, and possessing lively spirits with a clear and quick apprehension. At this season the mind is active, inquiring, and retentive; it is capacious, and must be filled; if its cravings be not supplied with appropriate aliment, it will feed on what is pernicious. The character that is not formed in youth, will need to be reformed

in manhood, when all concurrent aid is withdrawn, and when difficulties have increased and multiplied; when the mental soil must be cleared of deep-rooted and obstinate prejudices, from hurtful and long-cherished habits, and the rank growth of appetites and passions, which, like baneful weeds, have probably overrun it. But it may possibly be objected, that youth, how virtuously soever educated, sometimes degenerate to the opposite extreme of vice in manhood. True it is, that virtue ever suffers in the crowd; nor is it surprising that the inexperienced should be dazzled with the glare of novelty, and yield, in some degree, to the enticing appearances of pleasure; but few are the instances, it is presumed, wherein the youthful character, duly impressed with a sense of duty, and with the admiration of whatever is great and good, becomes suddenly and wholly obscured by a fallacious influence, which his better convictions must condemn.

Man, in his youth, is decidedly an imitative creature, and unsuspecting; his passive assent to serious admonition is naturally less cordial than his acquiescence in the specious and fascinating allurements that strike his senses, and flatter his imagination, while they betray his judgment. How difficult is it for inexperience to draw the line between seeming good and the reality; add to this, that past conviction, with the young, is rarely proof against present example, whose powerful and corrupt contagion proverbially prevails against good manners. But, notwithstanding these apparent discouragements, the advantage must ever abide on the side of early virtue; and the well-principled character, though it suffer a transient eclipse, is never totally extinguished. Vice becomes quickly divested of her mask, and when time exposes her deformity, he who has been seduced from the even path of duty, into the perplexing maze of error and folly, will quit it with disgust, when, beneath the specious bloom of promised joys, he detects the rankling thorns of anguish and remorse. To him, reformation will be the happy return to content; that restraint, which was

the guardian of his youthful virtue, is now exchanged for conviction, his guide and companion for life; and happy are they who are thus led from "strength to strength," in Wisdom's safe and pleasant way, animated by the prospect of honour and felicity, which brightens as they proceed.

The difficulty of amendment always augments in proportion to its delay, and is greatest where the will has been least subject to restraint, and a stranger to early discipline. The entrance to the path of duty will prove thorny and painful to such as have not been led betimes into it; and the reproofs of wisdom will ever sound harsh to those who have not early lent a willing ear to her voice; deaf as the adder to the music of the charmer, the mind, a victim to early neglect, and rendered callous by time, becomes more and more the abode of mischief and misery, and the strong-hold of rebellious passions. In this stage of growing depravity, the ray of departing hope trembles amid the gloom that obscures the mental horizon; human agency becomes impotent, and the voice of conscience is no longer heard but as a whisper in the storm. The fast-gathering clouds of ignorance and vice, blot out the face of heaven from his view, and the hapless victim of early neglect becomes as a wandering star, whose apparent doom is darkness for ever.

It behoves not the creature, doubtless, to limit the bounty of the Creator; a ray of divine light may break forth upon the disturbed vision of the most abandoned and perverse, though seemingly confirmed in error, and lost to all that is good. Even in the most hopeless case, Divine agency may work a change, but it must be a change great as of the leopard's spotted skin, or of the Ethiop's complexion; a change of will, of heart, of affections; a change which can be expressed only by the strong scriptural and figurative term, regeneration. In the former case, reformation was comparatively easy; in the latter, the painful reverse is too manifest to require a comment.

In the important article of religion, the children of the poor are, seemingly, better provided for than those of the wealthier

classes, though the good policy of such an arrangement is not very apparent. The poor are shrewd and jealous observers, and prone rather to imitate the example, than profit by the counsel of their superiors. Any shew of neglect, therefore, or indifference towards religion among the wealthy, must tend to weaken its hold on the public mind, and, consequently, to throw open the flood-gates of immorality and popular licentiousness; then Education itself is in danger of becoming powerless, when counteracted by prevalent example, and undermined by the influence of a too general corruption of manners.

If Education possessed no other recommendation, its social bearings would stamp it with inestimable value, as the direct means of advancing the temporal happiness of every individual no less than the well-being of society at large. The hold it takes on the human heart, makes it no neutral power; either it is a fountain of good, or of evil; and its influence, whether benign or malignant, is universally felt in its effects, which, collectively, are but the necessary results of its individual operation. From this great source is derived all that adds sweetness to domestic life, or that harmonizes social intercourse; all that confers intellectual vigour and moral grandeur on the character of man. By promoting Education (implying the strengthening the virtues and powers of rational beings), we may be said to enter into the views of heaven, and further the design of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, by opening those sources of mental enjoyment, which alone stamp a true value on existence, and render human life a blessing.

Among the many advantages resulting from mental culture, the kindly influence of a taste for literature, on all that is conducive to social happiness in its best sense, is by no means its least recommendation: spreading a rich and perpetual feast for reason, and opening an exhaustless fund of innocent delight and improvement; invigorating the understanding, purifying the heart, quickening all the springs of rational

pleasure, with the relish of refinement, and softening the native asperities of temper. By honourably engaging the mind, and rectifying its views, it exalts the character, excludes every meaner pursuit, and prevents the inferior appetites from gaining that ascendancy which is ever subversive of nobler satisfactions and pursuits, by chaining down the mind to the debasing gratifications of sense, eventually mingling its deadly poison in every cup that nature designed for the solace and refreshment of man.

As mental pleasures rise in estimation, the sensual necessarily recede, for intelligence and virtue are ever closely allied, and from their union the mind gains its truest strength. Without the support of knowledge virtue would languish and expire, and a cultivated intellect is the only proper soil of its vigorous growth; for virtue consists not in refined and speculative sentiment; nor is it an occasional inclining towards an ideal perfection, the fugitive growth of an hour: it is not within the comprehension, much less within the reach of ignorance. True virtue is the result of many convictions; a steady and persevering power, uniformly progressing in a long and measured course, with many ascents and difficulties, not to be surmounted but by the energies of a resolute mind: he that would win this race should start early on the course; he who has to encounter unknown enemies, and untried dangers, should buckle on his armour betimes. The soul that would mount from earth to heaven, cannot commence its ascent too soon.

Youth is the appointed season for acquiring all that is needful to man; manhood is the time for its use and application; for in maturer age, the mind moving in a busier sphere, becomes inaccessible to new and undivided impressions. Thus it has been observed, "The parental relation on God's part, and the filial on ours, may be more effectually impressed in youth, than afterwards; because, the filial feeling is a sentiment absolutely present with the young, but with man, who

advances into new associations, it is rather remembered than felt." In no instance does it excite our surprise, that a depraved life and character has followed a defective Education; it is rather regarded as the natural consequence of the omission: and if true of the individual, must hold equally in its application to society at large; simply, by extending the cause and effect, from a single to a multiplied scale.

The benefits of Education and literature extend to all: to opulence, opening countless channels of utility and pleasure, into which the superfluity of wealth may flow; humble merit is raised by it to the level of true respectability: the secrets of wisdom are made known to the simple and ignorant: in this soil all the virtues are ripened, and here thrive the social sympathies and Christian charities. Such are the natural results of intellectual culture. When guided aright, it comprises all the elements of social order and felicity, throwing a heavenly radiance over the darkest periods of life; enlivening the hours of seclusion, sickness, and suffering, and offering a soothing asylum where the wounded spirit may take refuge from the cares and vexations of the world, and to which virtue may safely and honourably retreat. To man, it exhibits true wisdom, teaching him to found self-respect on self-knowledge, and by convincing him wherein true merit consists, leads him to appreciate it rightly in others; without its kindly influence, human nature would present but a forbidding picture, and human society would progressively retrograde towards anarchy and pristine barbarity.

In the regular course of events, the national character necessarily takes a strong bias from the public resorts of youth of the higher classes: here are embodied the embryo of that wisdom and power which are destined to sway the interests of the empire. To these establishments, the nation confides her best treasure: on them she rests her dearest hopes, and she holds them justly responsible for the high and sacred trust. Every seed here sown, will in its time bring forth a hundred

fold. The habits here formed, whether of vice or of virtue, come forth into society, leagued with the authority which wealth and station invariably bestow; each individual becomes the centre of a separate sphere, shedding a kindly or baneful influence on all within the circle of his social movements, and by the power of a privileged example, diffusing good or ill on all around; who, again, in their several stations, influence a humbler sphere; thus, descending through the various grades of society, widening as it recedes, and transferring the evil or the good, often by a magnified reflection.

Its capability of perfection is that which stamps the human soul as the master-piece of creation; while its energies and faculties proclaim its high destination: its aptitude also to retain the bias given to it by early impressions, affords the best pledge of success, and surest ground of encouragement; and to this the assenting voice of experience bears universal testimony. In the wide page of history we may trace its operation at leisure. We there behold the justly renowned, whether patriots, princes, or philosophers, alike held up as the glory of their times, and shedding an unfading lustre on the land of their birth; and almost invariably we find such exemplary virtue and mental excellence abounding in proportion to its cultivation and encouragement, especially when strengthened by example; and the inference is conclusive, resting on a basis, wide as the empire of reason itself.

The decrees of heaven are absolute, nor may the laws and established order of Providence, in its dealings with men, be reversed by any secondary agency; and while causes continue to be connected with their effects, as well might we expect a crop from barren soil unsown, or that the shapeless stone should exhibit a model of the human figure in its symmetry, merely from the rude action of the elements, as to imagine that time, unaided by the hand of culture, should invest the imperfect creature with the semblance of the All-perfect Creator. The sculptor, whose practised hand has attained the confidence

of skill, emulous to rival nature in her noblest productions, bids the passive marble gradually assume the Godlike image in his thought; and whether the commanding form proclaim the hero, or softer beauty claim the tribute of admiration, though we contemplate with delight the proof of skill, our just tribute of praise is wholly reserved for the artist.

As heaven compared to earth, so is mind superior to matter; and equally surpassing is the task of the intellectual artist who designs the production of moral excellence: a work requiring abilities of the highest order. Reason will never expect to trace the characteristics of the Deity where they have never been inscribed, nor a copy of the Divine perfections in an unenlightened mind. Excellence is the choice fruit of well-timed and persevering industry alone, and never the growth of unassisted nature, in itself corrupt, and perpetually prone to evil rather than to good. Until adorned with virtue, endowed with knowledge, and dignified with truth and integrity, never can the human soul present a humble but faithful image of its All-Glorious Maker; a model of the Great Master Mind.

True it is that instances may be adduced, of minds that appear to have been by nature noble, and though untutored, have risen superior to every obstacle; whereas the inherent baseness of others, has even counteracted every advantage and retrograded to the level of the brute creation. But admitting that such exceptions may exist, and have existed, their occurrence is too rare to form a solid objection, and may well consist with the apparent design of nature, whose works, while they excite our admiration by their endless variety, surprise us no less by the wonderful exceptions they at times display, as striking proofs of her power, and of the undefined operations of her hand. Is man, her noblest work, to be alone excepted? or rather, should we not, in such a field, anticipate the utmost stretch of Divine skill, instanced by variety in all its extremes? Nor is any argument needful to prove that such is really the case. Among the myriads of the human race, two cannot be

found in all respects alike; nay, the same individual is often seen to differ from himself, presenting at various periods of his life, and in dissimilar circumstances, a decided contrast of character; as he who is a prodigal to-day, may possibly be a miser to-morrow; and, be it observed, that such versatility predominates chiefly in weak and uncultivated minds.

In forming a general estimate of man, we must average his powers, and take his character in the aggregate: exceptions being indefinite, and in their nature fluctuating, to base our reasonings and conviction upon them, would be to build upon the waves; neither should they occupy too much attention, lest, by perplexing the understanding, they divert the mind from its main object—a rational and decisive judgment. From comprehensive views alone, may general conclusions be safely drawn; exceptions, how great and numerous soever, affect not established laws, nor can create a separation between causes and effects; but even were it not so, the expediency of nurturing youth in sound principles and available knowledge, is placed far beyond the reach of possible objections. In this every member of the community is interested, from the monarch to the meanest of his subjects; it is equally the concern of the nation and of the individual.

The same reasoning that proves the individual advantages of Education, proclaim likewise its beneficial results in a public view; the same qualities that render a man desirable as a friend, and estimable as an individual, constitute him a good subject, and an useful member of society, for the same sterling ingredients enter into the composition of these various characters. The virtue that illumines the domestic sphere, extends a benign influence beyond its limits, and brightens the social atmosphere around. What constitutes the honour and happiness of families, invests the public character with the traits of genuine worth, and tends to consolidate the truest interests of the nation.

In the wondrous energies of the human mind, we recognize

no neutral power; its mighty and restless operation needs the master-hand of a wise control; if unrestrained, and suffered to run to a wild extreme, fearful would be its results; like the untameable maniac, no bonds would confine or check its mad career; but, with lawless force, it would break down every barrier, human and divine. The great political importance of Education is obvious to every man of sound judgment and understanding, and its public utility alone would be an all-sufficient motive with him who seeks the welfare of his country, earnestly to promote and extend it.

Virtue, when nourished in youth, grows up into habit, and then only it attains that ascendancy which marks the consistent character, respectable in itself, and honoured by the society it adorns. Such men form the support of public credit, and the true pillars of national faith and prosperity. They present the only efficient barrier that can check the overflowings of licentiousness, and arrest the progress of immorality and crime, and thus become the means of happily preventing those national calamities consequent on popular depravity, and of averting the heavy judgments of an incensed Deity, ever impending where impiety and sinful provocation abound.

Education is the great root of social order, and the only stock on which religion can rightly be grafted; of which, Bacon affirms, that it is the main pillar of government, placing it before justice, counsel, and treasure, which he terms the other three; and it is more than questionable whether the absence of its powerful influences can be countervailed by any measure of human intelligence. A community in which true religion has the ascendancy in the popular mind, must necessarily be more stable than that in which all knowledge abounds without it; for the society that casts off its wholesome restrictions, will also be destitute of its practical and genial influences. Sir William Jones has well observed, that "man cannot long be happy without virtue; or actively virtuous without freedom; or securely free without rational knowledge;" but this virtue

and this knowledge must centre in true religion, or their best support would be wanting, and the implied happiness would be fleeting and shadowy, rather than permanent and solid.

In common with other subjects of primary import, Education, at the present eventful period, assumes a character of two-fold weight and importance. The political convulsions that have lately rent the social fabric of Europe, and shaken to its foundation the ancient constitution of the empire, call loudly for inquiry into the causes, latent as well as avowed, that have conspired to mature and bring into so sudden and mighty action, a spirit of insubordination scarcely to be paralleled in the annals of nations.* Never did the collective voice of united multitudes take so elevated and decided a tone; never was public excitement raised to a more fearful pitch, than has recently threatened the internal peace and stability of the British realms.

Many, in recent times, have been the advocates of popular combinations, doubtless from a conviction of their expediency as a check to the encroachments of arbitrary power, or as a means of furthering salutary measures; yet, as a great political engine of doubtful operation, it must ever be contemplated with distrust, and as yielding a dangerous precedent, that may give birth to future and incalculable mischiefs, as a power too precarious to be trusted to the blind impulse of popular frenzy, or to a lawless spirit of arch-republicanism, before whose unhallowed sway all social and sacred obligations might lose their force, and perhaps for ever be annihilated. To Britain the threatening cloud has passed, and the fury of the tempest has subsided; but the warning echo still vibrates on the ear, like the voice of an angry spirit, calling on the rulers of men to be henceforth doubly wary and vigilant.

* This was written subsequent to a time of great popular excitement, occasioned by the agitation of political reform; a question, the merits of which forming no part of these Essays, any attempt on the part of the author to discuss it here, might justly be deemed an ill-timed digression.

Among the causes that have indirectly conspired to propagate the seeds of commotion, the indiscriminate spread of information may, perhaps, be enumerated as one, being unavoidably associated with that restless and jealous spirit of investigation, which forms so leading a feature of the times, and which, aided by the increased facility of intercourse, and the rapid communication of public sympathy (which, desirable as it is in itself, is most pernicious when abused), has been powerfully instrumental in keeping alive the flame of popular agitation; yet, as all such external agency must depend for its force and effect chiefly on the predisposed state of the public mind, we must also look for a prior cause, to those prejudices and prepossessions which have been fostered from childhood, and strengthened by the influence of prevalent custom and example; and this point being conceded, Education comes in for no ordinary share in the great events which, in such rapid succession, have passed, and are still passing, on the political theatre of Europe, involving the fate of nations, and proclaiming it to be no less the bounden duty, than the soundest policy of a legislature, to superintend even the humblest forms of Education.

That there is Education enough, may be true, while it by no means follows that it is wholly of the right sort. As it is obviously easier to make a people knowing than to make them virtuous, it is evident where the main stress ought to be laid. The widest diffusion of knowledge will not alone suffice for the great ends of social existence; for beneficial as its agency unquestionably is, in furthering the noblest objects, and on the most extended scale, yet modern experience has shewn, that in corrupt hands it is no less active and mighty for the propagation of the most baneful and destructive errors.

Never, perhaps, was there a time more pregnant with interest than the present; at no period has human society presented a more imposing aspect; and never, probably, were the prospective features of any era, collectively, more animating. But while, on the one hand, the patriot and the philanthropist may

indulge in feelings of honest triumph, while contemplating the aspiring intellect of man, daily progressing amid the irradiations of science and the expansion of truth; yet, on the other hand, it is scarcely possible to repress a feeling of apprehension and deep concern, while constrained to mark the inroads of infidelity, and the growing spirit of reckless licentiousness, which, if not timely checked, seems to threaten the gradual subversion of the most sacred obligations.

At such a crisis, highly gratifying must it be to every friend of social harmony, and to every lover of his country, to see the most talented and influential spirits of the age standing forth as the avowed champions of truth and virtue, and the steady promoters of all rational improvement; by the brightness of their example, shedding around them a benignant influence, cordially devoting their superior energies to the public weal, and the establishment of national prosperity on the most honourable and lasting basis.

Ignorance, impiety, and moral corruption, are ever hand in hand, and in proportion as they are tolerated, contaminate the public mind, and prey on the vitals of a state: how steadily soever the political machine may apparently work, and how regular soever its visible movements for a time, there will be no solid ground on which policy may rest the hope of its continuance, when thus undermined. Though all science and talent were blended in one bright phalanx, it would form but a vain support, unless associated with that public worth, which is based on individual virtue.

To what will a wise and loyal people ever look, even in times of seeming security? Though no cause of present disquiet appear, yet will they bend an eye of inquiring interest on those who are preparing to assume the reins of power, as soon as they fall from the hands of their brief possessors; they will look, not without reason, to the characters of the rising aspirants of the coming generation, who, in succession, are stepping into authority, as their sires and seniors resign their

earthly trust. The greatest present advantage has little weight in the estimation of the wise, if he be not able to calculate on its continuance: if the future be darkened by the discouraging clouds of doubt, the present, however bright, will yield but small content. If there be any force in the application of similar remarks to individual cases in private life, how is it magnified when extended to a broad political influence, necessarily involving the fate of millions! and if it behoves the prudent man to guard against surprise and accident, much more does it concern the greatest nation upon earth to anticipate contingencies, and be prepared for every change within the range of probability.

The sovereign fiat of "the powers that be," and from which lies no appeal—the law's award, the prince's edict, the senate's mandate, these are prime movers in the body politic, essentially are they interwoven with the public weal. Sanctioned corruption in any of these leading forms, would be as a moral incubus paralyzing the hopes and best energies of popular virtue. But to whom should such important trusts be confided? How imperatively needful is it that all which emanates from such constituted powers should be the result of integrity and wisdom, and how worthily ought they to be qualified who deliberately assume so high a responsibility!

He that aspires to more than a mere nominal sway over a free people, must have a hold on the heart as well as on the judgment; where this is wanting, even a sovereign is but half a ruler. Public trusts are commonly precarious tenures. To render them stable and lasting, something more is requisite than even the energetic and faithful discharge of duty. The manly and honourable character must be sustained by those social qualities, which, as a wholesome leaven, should temper all its operations. These are things that, as Lord Bacon expresses it, "come home to men's bosoms and business." Assuredly those are most likely to win, as well as to retain, the reins of political power, whose names are associated with

popular social institutions, and with public objects of whatever kind, whose tendency is obviously beneficial to the community; hence it becomes apparent that they have the true interests of the people at heart, while cordially co-operating in every laudable design, and promptly seizing occasions of doing good both in a public and private capacity, sympathizing with, and, as far as may be consistent, participating in their views and feelings. Whatever be the statesman's creed, and how wise soever he may deem it (in his political career) to adopt the stoical "fortiter" for his motto, yet, in his social capacity, he will probably act not less wisely, and certainly not fare the worse, by taking the more auspicious "suaviter" as his guiding-star in his round of daily intercourse, walking with men as with members of one great family in the chequered and busy, no less than in the more peaceful paths of private life. A conciliating spirit is a social talisman of virtue, to assuage the bitterness of party, to quell the demon of discord, and to prevent the direst consequences by arresting the progress of evil in its incipient stages, and wisely eradicating it on its first appearance.

The most refined policy will be found consonant with this plain truth, that to form aright those characters which are gradually rising into power, is to lay the surest foundation for every national good, and will prove more available than the most sagacious and energetic policy without such precaution. By reason of death, and various accidents, so rapid is the transfer of earthly power, so soon, and often suddenly, is man summoned from his post, that not to anticipate it in a concern of so great moment, is wilfully to close the eyes against approaching danger, and turn a deaf ear to the warnings of common prudence.

It is the part of wisdom to be most vigilant where she is most vulnerable, and to yield no vantage ground to the common enemy, which, politically speaking, is to put in jeopardy a people's welfare, and counteract, in a measure, the very end

of government and judicious policy. So fragile, in state concerns, is the bond of union by which the best-formed combinations are connected, so liable to be dissolved by unforeseen causes, by dissension, by intrigue, by changes of measures and opinions, fluctuating with the tide of public events, that what is flourishing and vigorous to-day, may to-morrow be broken without remedy.

The collective wisdom of the national council, its endless and all-engrossing business, the enactment of salutary laws, the enforcing of public measures, all tend to one great aim—the interests and happiness of the millions; but how important is the trust, and how urgent is the demand for superior wisdom and worth in the right discharge of it! So destructive an engine is power in corrupt hands, that every preventive means should be adopted, that a judicious foresight can suggest, for its exclusion; and none can possibly be more effectual than that timely provision which strikes at the root of the evil, by the proper qualification of those who, in the ordinary course of events, are destined to take a leading part in the national acts and deliberations.

Education is the great remedy which wisdom imperatively points out for the counteraction of public as well as of private and domestic evil. To put vice in power, is to distance all virtue, and put it to shame. Corruption is as a cancer in the constitution, strengthening itself by a thousand mischievous roots, corroding the peace and vital stability of the social community, and undermining that sterling and uncompromising integrity which constitutes the nerves of a nation's strength, and whence she derives the commanding features of her character. From history we may learn that the baneful influence of current corruption is pregnant with speedy ruin; and in proportion as it prevails, the authority of a state must necessarily decline, nor can a healthful tone be restored to the vitiated system, until its spreading and multiplying roots be eradicated.

The crown of wisdom in all things affecting the great interests of humanity, and of all reasoning on the subject, is, doubtless, that which propitiates the Divine blessing, and is, in Bacon's phrase, "a law of laws." All policy that is merely human in its aim and origin, is distanced by that higher wisdom, whose object and tendency is to secure the favour and protection of the Great Disposer of events, "who changeth the times and the seasons, and at what time He speaketh concerning a nation or a kingdom, to build and to plant it, or to pluck up and pull down, and destroy it, it shall be done." Vain is the arm of earthly power, and the eye of human judgment to direct, without the breast-plate of Heavenly Truth, and the light of that "wisdom which is from above."

The upright in heart are the chosen instruments by which the favour and blessing of heaven are communicated to mankind. National counsel must be guided by integrity, and its decrees must be stamped with inviolable faith, if the object be to secure a beneficial course of operation; and hence that grandeur of character which constitutes the glory of a nation, and the true standard of its estimation. Though individual exceptions scarce affect the national character in its collective view, yet it borrows a degree of light or shade from every member of the community.

So deeply does Education colour the fate and character of a nation, that from either we are enabled to infer the other, by the simple combination of cause and effect. Wherever the rays of knowledge and virtue fall, they shed a lustre, and happy is the government that diffuses them widely; wherever the genial influence of such a light prevails, the profoundest policy may work in safety and at leisure.

Every man bears a faithful witness in his own breast of the excellence and efficacy of genuine piety. In proportion as the spirit of true religion pervades the public mind, it adds moral dignity and strength to the social character, and gives the impress of stability to all that is fair and honourable among

men. Its powerful and animating motives supply the only stimulus that can exalt human virtue to perfection, or render the human character truly consistent and respectable.

Popular depravity and a spirit of irreligion progress together, and from their inauspicious union are generated all the discordant elements of civil anarchy and moral confusion, waging eternal warfare with all that is great and good. If any be sceptical as to the nature and extent of evil thus derived, let him turn to the revolutionary page, which forms a perpetual stain in the annals of France; there let him contemplate the melancholy consequences of their ascendancy, inscribed in characters most appalling to humanity; where, like a sanguinary and many-headed monster, anarchy, in its wild and lawless career, is seen overthrowing every constituted barrier, human and divine, profaning all that is sacred, corrupting all that is lovely, confounding every distinction of right and wrong, and trampling under foot all the decencies and charities of life; scattering around the certain seeds of national ruin, and tainting the moral atmosphere with deadly contagion; transforming man into a fiend, and converting the smiling abodes of innocence and domestic peace into scenes of cruelty and wretchedness, deluged with blood and slaughter, and leaving nought behind, in its murderous course, save the fearful wrecks of desolation, as a warning memento to all succeeding times.

Whatever may be alleged against Britain by her enemies or rivals, in the shape of failure or defect, she still sits as queen among the nations, and justly is she the pride and boast of her free-born sons, nor can her dearly-purchased honours be tarnished but by her own connivance. Greater and happier she possibly might have been, had immaculate wisdom at all times borne the sway in her councils; but perfection is not of this world; and if from the seeds of past error she has tasted some bitter fruits, they have inspired that wisdom which ripens only by experience, nor can any created power set limits to her increasing greatness and prosperity, so long as she continues

to look steadily towards her own true interests, and avails herself of the means she so abundantly possesses for advancing them.

Every age brings with it a lecture of wisdom and sound policy, teaching us to do for posterity, what, if previously done, would have benefited us, and disclosing those springs of known good, which it is our duty and privilege to open for the benefit of future generations. To the energetic and well-directed zeal of our ancestors, under Divine Providence, England owes her present elevation: Fame has loudly blazoned her deeds, and the remotest regions of the earth have echoed back the animating sound. Her admirable constitution and legislature, her promptitude and vigour in resolving and acting, her naval and military prowess, the disinterested ardour with which she espouses every cause that is honourable to humanity, with the eminent talents and worth of her public men, have all conspired to mark her career with characters of unrivalled splendour, and worthy to be contemplated by her youth, not with vain glory, but with that generous emulation, which gives birth to patriotic and magnanimous designs.

How bright and cheering soever the retrospect may be, it is the "unknown future" that remains to be explored, which is to us the object of real and immediate concern. Perpetual change is the character impressed on all sublunary things; nothing that is human preserves an uniform level. The wheels of time, in their continual revolutions, bring to man a daily accession of good or evil, and to nations an increase or diminution of honour and prosperity; and all who desire to reap, must be careful to sow accordingly.

The nation's rising hopes are centred in her youth, and she must advance or retrograde as they fulfil or frustrate her expectations; in their rectitude she will ever find her surest bulwark: strength of principle is the soul of great achievement, and the arm of courage, to be invincible, must be strung by the sinews of integrity. Education, in its best sense, is the

happy but indispensable means of attaining all that, as a nation, we can anticipate, or can desire as Christians.

If not wanting to herself, Britain has nothing to fear, and every thing to hope; and while her excellent constitution, and pure religion (the ancient and venerable pillars of her throne) remain unshaken, though the nations around may totter, and successively fall, she will stand majestic and immoveable, and enjoy the calm triumph of conscious security.

ESSAY II.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY—CONSEQUENCES OF INDISCRIMINATE INDULGENCE—CAPABILITIES AND SYMPATHIES OF THE INFANT MIND—IMPORTANCE OF ATTENTION TO HEALTH—PREMATURE STUDY SUBVERSIVE OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ENERGY—ON THE REGULATION OF TEMPER—THE FORMATION OF HABITS—PUNISHMENTS AND REWARDS—THE LOVE OF PRAISE—ITS EFFICACY—MATERNAL INFLUENCE AND PARENTAL EXAMPLE—CONCLUDING SUGGESTIONS.

THAT early Education, or the careful training of the infant mind, is a concern of the highest importance in the sight of heaven, will plainly appear by considering the wise provision made to secure it in the established order and connection of society; and in no appointment of Divine Providence are its wisdom and goodness more conspicuous, than in the obligations which naturally subsist between parents and their children. On their cherished offspring the parental eye looks down with the warmth and partiality of affection; the heart is drawn by the strongest tie of sympathy, prompting the best feelings of humanity; while innocence, helplessness, and dependence, make their artless but eloquent appeal: and the respondent care of the parent is rightly evinced by earnestly promoting their present and future welfare, by all the means that the tenderest concern and most prudent foresight can suggest; and hence the happiest results may reasonably be anticipated, while affection is subjected to the control of discretion and the guidance of sober judgment.

But, notwithstanding the beneficial tendency of an arrangement so admirably adapted to its benevolent design, it is but too frequently a subject of painful reflection, that hopes of the brightest hue are prematurely clouded and obscured, in consequence of that ill-timed indulgence, which, mindful only of present gratification, overlooks the future, and discerns not that such mistaken fondness tends ever to counteract its own aim, by giving undue ascendancy to a selfish spirit. A corrupting principle is thus engendered in the mind, by which its tone and constitution are impaired; a disordered will introduces discontent, and a train of ill consequences naturally follow.

Every child must ultimately prove, to its parents, a blessing or a curse, for there is no alternative. Though heaven confer the gift, and pronounce it good, yet, as in other gifts, the blessing is made to depend on its improvement. The judicious, by the faithful discharge of the parental trust, secure to themselves and to their offspring the greatest and most permanent advantages, crowned with that consciousness, which is a never-failing spring of the purest satisfaction; whereas, on the contrary, neglect is not only pregnant with present danger, but involves the most awful responsibility, and becomes the bitter source (in addition to temporal mischiefs) of unceasing and unavailing regret. Even to parental affection, then, it is evident that "there is a way that seemeth right, but the end thereof is not good."

Because evil, in its grosser form, flows not manifestly from so amiable a source, its current is unsuspected; and thus the wholesome restrictions that prudence may suggest, as preventives of incipient evil, are deemed the intrusive and unwelcome emanation of a mind prone to melancholy or misanthropy. Vigilance is banished as an importunate guest, and hardly does Caution gain access to the domestic circle, lest its presence should cast a shade on scenes whose present aspect is smiling; yet these are found where wisdom dwells, and by them alone

the secret mischief is detected, and its course timely arrested. Inadvertence always leaves an open door for the admission of error and folly, and let experience decide whether they be slow to enter.

Even the becoming gaiety of childhood, innocent and amiable as it is in itself, if wholly unrestrained, is the common prelude to impertinence and ill-timed levity: but whatever degree of restraint prudence may dictate, as a means of enforcing virtue, should, doubtless, at this early season be wholly divested of severity. When reproof is administered with tenderness, emotions of sensibility are awakened, and may easily be improved to any beneficial purpose, and the impression thus made on a susceptible mind, will be as lasting as it is salutary. But those chidings of anger, which assume the character of austerity, invariably tend to excite a feeling of irritation and disgust, which, by taking possession of the mind, exclude for the time every better consideration, and, when strengthened by an inherent spirit of obstinacy, become often the provocatives of those very mischiefs, which they were intended to prevent.

Of the two extremes, it is, perhaps, not easy to determine which is the more pernicious—an unlimited indulgence, or an unreasonable severity; in one point only they correspond, being alike the fertile roots of incalculable evils: equally remote from either lies the golden mediocrity, which, to discern clearly, and pursue uniformly, requires no ordinary share of sagacity and prudence; but which must ever rise in our estimation, in proportion as it engages our earnest consideration.

Every day gives birth to manifold deplorable consequences, which, from seemingly trivial neglects during the earlier stages of life, have invaded the peace of society. Startling and almost incredible as the assertion may at first sight appear to such as have not duly considered it, it will, upon investigation, be found probably not to exceed the truth, that, of the vice and misery which unhappily has overspread the earth, by far

the greater proportion has, in every age, been derived from this fertile source of error. Nor, for a confirmation of this, need we explore barbarous and besotted nations, ancient or modern. Our own highly-privileged land, the fountain-head of intelligence, the patroness of all excellence, and the promoter of virtue and merit, as she unquestionably is, brings daily confirmation of the unwelcome truth. We have but to look around, and contemplate the youthful multitudes of both sexes heedlessly plunging into the abyss of infamy and ruin, and affording but too sure a conviction of the painful truth; thousands, to whom the light of day has proved a curse, betraying them to error and destruction for want of that better and more needful light of sound and early admonition, to preserve their youthful minds from evil, and to guide their first steps in the ways of rectitude and peace.

Reason has no just ground to infer that such willing victims of error were by nature inferior to others of their own age and station, who, by the aid of timely mental and moral culture, have attained the summit of earthly comfort and honour: like them, had not their susceptible hearts been left unguarded, they also might have become edifying patterns of youthful discretion, an ornament to society, a comfort to their connections, and the means of blessing to thousands; above all, they would have escaped the restless stings of self-reproach, sharpened by the chilling blast of adversity, and embittered by universal contempt.

The wounded feelings of many an affectionate parent bear evidence to the unhappy consequences of an unrestrained indulgence, whence so often may be traced the disappointment of the fondest hopes the parental heart can cherish. By sad experience have they been taught, how rapidly and fatally pride, self-will, and passion, strike their baneful roots, and fix their growing dominion in the juvenile breast, which thus becomes a prey to its own selfish propensities, or, in stronger

language, to that natural depravity, which is the fatal and almost certain inheritance of neglected childhood. All doubt on this point would quickly disappear, were it possible to pourtray but a tithe of the mischiefs and miseries, public and private, which have marked the sanguinary course of the passions (violent and ungovernable, because not subdued at that season when only they are manageable): dreadful to contemplate would such a picture be; but its terrors would carry conviction into every mind, of the absolute necessity of counteracting each rising indication of a selfish spirit, the sure precursor of a cruel and tyrannical temper.

Self is the great idol of the natural will, and forms the leading characteristic of untutored childhood, with a restless current running towards its individual gratification: discontent and animosity are excited by opposition to its inordinate desires, while indulgence serves only to augment its force, and render it more heedless of the claims of others; and whatever variety may be observable in the dispositions of children, there will, in this respect at least, be found a resemblance sufficient to exercise the discretion of the most judicious and skilful. The force of such considerations is greatly augmented, when, to the tragical consequences of neglect, we contrast the happy effects of well-timed discipline, by which, as by a miraculous power, the scene is changed, and its forbidding characters reversed; the discouraging perspective of evil disappears, and is succeeded by rising prospects of social order and felicity.

The prohibition of single indulgences might well be deemed cynical, unless designed to avert the danger arising from the habits to which they give birth. A solitary instance of selfish gratification, of indolence, or of childish intemperance, if not repeated, would scarce merit notice; but when it is considered how rapidly all habits of sensual indulgence are generated, how greatly they are strengthened by every repetition; and, on the other hand, with what difficulty good habits are formed,

how slowly they are brought to perfection, and how unwelcome the transition from habitual self-will to a habit of self-denial; allowing to such considerations their due weight, there are few things in which children habitually delight, that can be esteemed as of trivial import.

Consequences will always be kept in view, by those who have the true interest of their offspring at heart, and wisely pursue it; for although the body attains to its vigour by slow and imperceptible degrees, the passions, in their growth, outstrip all calculation: even the lisping infant, already spoiled by indulgence, though unable to stand alone, will, if denied its object, often manifest a degree of rage and obstinacy, which, though daily witnessed, it is not easy to describe.

To indulge children merely because, as helpless and dependent creatures, they claim our sympathy, is to increase their natural weakness, and multiply their wants: it is because their reason is weak, they require the guidance of those whose reason is strong; and if the will of the child be not submitted to the superior judgment of the parent, while it is yet pliant, it is contrary to reason to imagine that it will bend more readily when time has added to its strength. Nor will half-measures of obedience suffice, commonly as they are adopted, and convenient as they may be on certain occasions: any thing short of an entire submission creates indecision, and if inclination be permitted to plead against duty, it is easy to predict the fate of conscience in so unequal a struggle.

On the serious consequences of an inordinate indulgence, there is need to lay the greater stress, because it is as prevalent, and doubtless is as mischievous, in the present as in any past age; besides, it is one of that class of evils in which even conviction is vain, and seems to bring no effectual remedy; in a greater or less degree it will prevail, and be a domestic scourge to the end of time.

Profane history abounds with examples of the folly and deplorable consequences of parental error, wherein the ascen-

dancy of a blind and besotted fondness has given birth to a series of complicated evils, whose desolating course has been marked, not only by the wrecks of domestic peace, but also by the fatal progress of sanguinary intestine commotions, by which the most flourishing states have been ultimately subverted.

At present, it may suffice to limit our attention to two remarkable illustrations, drawn from a higher source; nor will they, on that account, it is hoped, be deemed less appropriate or less interesting. In the sacred writings, mention is rarely made of domestic details. The family of David forms, however, one of the exceptions: in many respects it is a most instructive record, and peculiarly adapted to our present purpose. Of the sons of David, Absalom and Adonijah are described as possessing superior beauty and personal attractions; both were evidently the objects of their father's fondest affections, and from the intimations given, it may, without exaggeration, be inferred that they were, in the truest sense, both spoiled children. Of these, Absalom was the first-born, and the darling idol of paternal affection: witness the pathetic lamentation of David, when apprised of his death. Of Adonijah, also, it is expressly stated, that "his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?" An all-sufficient latitude this for the sons of a powerful and absolute prince. Admired, pampered, and flattered, as we may reasonably suppose they would be under such circumstances, how ill-timed was so unlimited an indulgence, where a salutary restraint was doubly needful, and how impolitic, it may be added, as the fatal result so fully proved!

Instigated by pride and restless ambition, these princes successively rebelled against the too indulgent author of their days. Enslaved by evil passions, which had been fostered by indolence and sensuality, they eventually converted their father's flourishing domain into a theatre of intestine strife, rending the state with factions, and remorselessly plunging the kingdom into all the horrors of civil war. Absalom, the elder, took the

lead in this unnatural struggle; but the example of his tragical end failed to operate on the infatuated Adonijah, who madly rekindled the flames of rebellion, persisting, while he was able, in the same impious career of ambition.

What a lesson is here! evidently designed as a warning to parents in succeeding generations. David's was not a weak or common mind; the lines of his character are strongly marked. Perfection is not a human attribute; but in noble qualities, befitting a prince, he certainly excelled. Magnanimous and brave, prudent in counsel, and resolute in action; of a masculine piety, so pure and elevated, as to obtain for him the title of "a man after God's own heart;" an honour which, in the earlier part of his reign, at least, he seems to have merited. If such a man could fail in the essential duty of a parent, who may deem themselves infallible? It is, in fact, a serious memento to the wisest to take heed and beware. The fault of David, as a parent, lay chiefly in relaxing all the wholesome restraints of discipline, or rather in imposing none, at the season of life and under circumstances wherein rank, beauty, and adulation, combined with the heedless spirit of youth to render them needful in a seven-fold degree.

But how faulty soever David's conduct as a father might have been, it was expiated by the severity of his sufferings and punishment. Wounded to the heart by the hand he had fondly cherished in his bosom—chased like a fugitive in his own dominions, and by his own thankless offspring—his domestic establishment disgracefully invaded and broken up—humbled, and forced for a season to vacate his tottering throne; and all this in addition to the stings of self-reproof, and the bitterness of a wounded spirit.

It is not by these deductions implied, that "the head and front" of David's offence lay in his paternal error; he had previously incurred the Divine denunciation, that "the sword should not depart from his house;" that the judgment might be fulfilled, David was permitted, or rather appointed, to fall

into error, which, in its consequences, brought upon him the punishment originally denounced against his family for his unworthy conduct in the matter of Uriah. This explanation seemed needful to break the force of objections, because it is plain that the error was itself the effect of the Divine indignation, and that the mischievous consequences that ensued were the natural effects of parental misconduct.

A still more pointed illustration of parental error, and its attendant evils, is supplied by the brief narrative of Eli and his sons. Eli was so distinguished by the Divine favour, as to leave no doubt of his being an amiable and upright man. In his patriarchal capacity, combining the office of high-priest with that of a secular prince, he judged Israel, we are told, forty years. His two sons having attained to manhood, shared with him the priesthood and the power; how shamefully they abused their authority, we are informed. That he was indulgent to an extreme of folly, and that they, in an equal degree, were disobedient, is plainly intimated: "His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." This, in any instance, would have been culpable; but in Eli's case it was a most unworthy dereliction of every just principle and motive.

Eli was the guardian of Jehovah's chosen people: invested with so great honour, great was his responsibility. He was the immediate servant of Him who styles himself "a jealous God;" whose language is, "Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." Exalted thus, and blessed with an overflowing measure of temporal good, he was bound by every tie of gratitude to be jealous for the honour of his Heavenly Benefactor; but he "honoured his sons above God;" and wherefore? They were men of the most licentious and abandoned character, whose impieties had grown to so enormous a height, that "men abhorred the offering of the Lord." Their father tells them that he hears of their evil dealings by all the people; but he takes no steps to eject them from the sacred office, which they daily

profaned, nor to banish them from the altars of the Most High, which they daily polluted. It appears that they were not even suspended, for they were in possession of the ark of the covenant till the day of their death.

Eli presumes on the indulgent forbearance of God till it is exhausted, and the fatal blow is struck, which he receives with resignation, as conscious of fully deserving it. To add to his punishment, his condemnation is pronounced by the infant Samuel. A stranger also accosts him, as the bearer of God's awful denunciation: "Thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, shall be cut off;" and speedily was it accomplished to the very letter. This, it must be owned, is an awful and no common case; the whole range of history contains nothing that more strongly depicts the danger and folly of protracted neglect, or omission in the discharge of parental duty. Such gross violations of it in characters so distinguished, lead us naturally to infer that such errors are attended with a kind of moral infatuation, as in contracting a habit which, by yielding to its first impulses, we become less and less able or willing to resist, because, with every repetition, it gains an accelerated impetus, till we cease to resist its power. We may therefore infer, that it is in the early stages of error that the danger chiefly lies, and that to arrest its progress betimes, is one of the strongest indications of parental wisdom.

In order, however, to avoid a dangerous error, a careful distinction should be made between indiscriminate indulgence, and such as is needful and rational; for the one is, doubtless, as friendly to virtue, as the other is inimical to it. To subject a child to continued self-denial, would be as absurd as it is unfeeling, and not only useless, but decidedly pernicious. There is nothing that wins more upon the affections of the young than well-judged kindness; and if the heart be not won, half the labour of Education will be lost.

The prevalence of error in the early training of children, is an old complaint, and so manifestly injurious is its operation,

that wherever it exists, it is plainly discernible in its effects, however concealed its roots may be; and the first effectual step towards checking its future growth, will be to examine the noxious seed itself, and also the nature of the soil by which it is nourished. Its origin is, doubtless, in the infant mind, springing from the incipient corruption inherent in a degenerate nature, but its progressive strength and increase are unquestionably the result of mismanagement, though not in every case, perhaps, exactly proportioned to it.

On a question of such universal import, and so complicated as Education, embracing in its operation all that can influence the happiness and virtue of intellectual beings, the more we contract our views, the greater space we leave for the establishment of error. The survey should be broad and unconfined, in order that no room for mistake may remain; otherwise a partial and undue regard to some favourite object might operate to the exclusion of others equally desirable, and induce principles, specious in theory, perhaps, but wanting solidity, and ultimately subversive even of its own design. If, for instance, the zealous advocate for mental discipline should adopt and rigidly adhere to a chosen system, seemingly well calculated to facilitate the attainment of the desired knowledge, but overlooking the casualties of health, temperament, &c., it might, in three cases out of four, do more harm than good, unless judiciously varied in individual instances, to meet the peculiarities of genius, taste, and habit, which in different constitutions are almost endlessly diversified.

The powers of the body, as well as of the mind, their sympathizing connection and mutual dependence, ought to be duly weighed; nor should, in any case, the present peace and comfort of a child (with which its health and virtue are nearly connected) be sacrificed to the future and doubtful advantages of science. As a map should we spread before us the probable contingencies of life, and make choice of that route which, upon the whole, will be the safest and pleasantest, keeping

always in view its felicitous termination as the great end of existence.

When and in what manner should Education commence, is a question in which every parent is deeply interested, for its first influences, like the first steps in active life, often determine the fate and prospects of man; and it is doubtless of equal consequence to decide aright as to the most eligible course to be pursued during the incipient stage of instruction, which may comprise the first six or eight years of childhood. In one sense, Education may be said to commence from the cradle, for the operations of the mind begin with the dawn of observation. Knowledge has been aptly compared with light, as ignorance implies mental darkness. Light, the first and best natural gift of heaven, is imparted with the sense of seeing, and the mind's eye, doubtless, should be illumined as soon as it has the power of intellectual perception: good impressions cannot be made too soon; on this point all agree, but the mode of imparting them is a question on which the wisest of men have differed.

Some who have entered deeply into the subject, and whose opinions seem to carry considerable weight, have concluded that the first business of Education should have little or nothing to do with books, or with any thing in the shape of formal study, which, when imposed too early, produces no good effect, but may be, and often has been, the cause of much harm. There are, it is true, in the present day, publications in abundance, well adapted for children, and wherein knowledge is admirably blended with entertainment; and such only should be adopted during the earlier process of instruction. The most needful knowledge, however, is not always that which is derived from books; and children, often at the expense of their peace, acquire a little with difficulty, which, naturally causing disgust, is soon forgotten, and consequently useless.

By that premature tuition which is here deprecated, is meant, the enforcing of study and habitual confinement, ere

the bodily health and the faculties are sufficiently strong to bear the discipline. Nothing preys on the infant constitution, and undermines its stamina, so much as that absurd restraint which checks the natural flow of animal spirits, at the same time subjecting the delicate mind to a continual weight of apprehension. Health is assuredly the foundation-stone on which the stability of the whole superstructure depends. The duties, as well as the enjoyments of life, the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom, all rest upon it. Of all the predisposing causes of debility and decay, mental and bodily, none are more fatally certain in their operation than the secretly destructive habits of sedentary application too early imposed. The very temper and disposition depend much on the health, and with these the pleasurable progress of Education is essentially connected.

If it be demanded, is a child to remain idle? it is replied, what is idleness to a mind matured, is not so to the infant; rather, it is a needful liberty, by which its tender faculties are nourished. With the child, observation is perpetually on the wing; every thing wears the attractive charm of novelty; curiosity is continually excited, and the active mind is always craving new information: to confine the attention at this age is to impose a painful restraint upon the mind, and to contract the proper field for its exercise which nature has provided, and in which it delights to range at large.

During these first years of childhood, nature demands a lenient hand, and the nourishing intercourse of affectionate endearment, rather than the austerity of control, excepting only what relates to the temper, which, from its first indication, should be watched and regulated. But seclusion and mental abstraction at this tender age invariably tend to impair the health, by checking the growth and vital spirits at the very time, perhaps, that the mind is put upon a stretch above its powers; a two-fold mistake by no means uncommon, though often most injurious in its consequences. It is the error of

overrating the capacity, that gives birth to the worse error of overtasking it, and is a fallacy into which parents are betrayed, less, perhaps, from blind partiality, than from mistaking the cunning and caprice, and strong passions of children, for marks of maturing intellect, and thus making a false estimate of their mental powers. But if strong passions were indeed indications of mind, it would be easy to prove that the wisest of mankind are far surpassed by the brute creation. The reverse is so far true, that even with these, the noblest are among the gentlest; and in judging of men, we rationally conclude that to be the weakest mind, in which passion has the greatest ascendancy. To suppose, therefore, that as soon as a child evinces strong sensibilities, it is capable of proportionate mental exertion and habits of application, would be as absurd as its operation would be subversive of that chief of earthly blessings, "a sound mind in a sound body."

What, then, is to be inferred, as the end and main business of elementary Education? Not to impart knowledge, but rather to strengthen the faculties of the mind individually, previous to their being exercised collectively; to prepare the various springs and separate movements of the machine, prior to its being set in full operation. A healthful frame is the seat of an active mind and a cheerful temper; these are objects of the first concern, and to be secured at any price: habits of order and obedience may also gradually be formed from infancy. The seeds of the generous and social virtues may now be cherished, with an inviolable regard to truth and justice; the errors and inadvertencies of childhood may be rectified; colloquial and pleasing information may be imparted; and the sublime truths of religion, with its practical duties, inculcated, as far as they can be made intelligible to the understanding. To accomplish this will hardly admit of a misapplication of time; and if done (as it surely may) with little aid from books, must in many cases prove an additional recommendation. Should the first years of a child's life be thus disposed of, it is

not easy to conceive in what manner they could have been more profitably occupied, either as respects the true interests of Education, or the solid happiness of life.

This first or preparatory stage of Education, may be likened to its fountain-head, which, if foul and bitter, all that flows from it will partake of its noxious qualities; but, if purified and sweet, its remotest streams will proclaim their salutary source. From the sentiments advanced above, let it not be inferred that their author is unfriendly to books, though opposed to the premature and indiscriminate use of them. Children are apt to imbibe a strong antipathy to books, when injudiciously put into their hands, and this early disgust, once rooted in the mind, is seldom, if ever, wholly eradicated, and opposes a bar to the future improvement to be derived from them. No feeling of disgust should mingle with infantile instruction, nor should books be familiarized to the mind of a child, but as connected with the idea of something very good, profitable, or pleasant. That elementary books should be amusing, all are agreed; many of this laudable character are excellent in themselves, and would be invaluable, did their effects correspond to their scope and contents, and were an even line always drawn between the use and abuse of them; for even such as are diverting, may become hurtful in the contrary extreme, by fostering a spirit of levity, and giving too trifling and volatile a turn to the mind.

Were things to be estimated by their actual consequences, the nursery would be deemed a place of considerable importance: few parents connect the idea of danger with it, yet, if it be true that first impressions are lasting, it follows, that the copious seeds of good or evil are implanted in the breast long, perhaps, ere the child is removed from its paternal roof. It is here that virtue and vice, truth and error, strike their first roots; and if at this seed-time of the mind it be not diligently weeded, it will soon become an unprofitable waste. To the nursery, often, may be traced the wrong bias of temper and

the first growth of irregular passions. The newly-expanding faculties are there enlightened by the first rays of intelligence, or dimmed by the mists of error and ignorance. In many a well-regulated family, due care is doubtless taken (an important precaution) to provide the superintendence of persons possessing the needful qualities of good sense and good nature, who can listen with patience, and kindly reply to infantile curiosity; who know how to derive advantage from trifles, and to render passing occurrences subservient to the great end of improvement.

During this interesting period, which may determine, in a great measure, the future character and destiny of man, the danger of omission is increased seven-fold, where the parental authority is withdrawn, or periodically transferred to dependents. A parent is by no means released from responsibility by reposing confidence in others, for experience proves that the most sacred trusts are often betrayed, and admonishes all, in matters of high moment, to depend solely, or at least chiefly, on themselves. There will be little cause for surprise, and less for well-grounded complaint, at the refractory and vicious conduct of children, who may have been often left, and for many months together subject, perhaps, to the caprice and tyranny of ignorance, and consequent mismanagement in its worst shapes. Too often, alas! has parental inadvertence been thus the means of opening those baneful springs, whose dark current has followed them through life, mingling bitterness with reflection.

In the nursery, it is presumed, that books are first put into the hands of children; to this, there can be no objection, if well selected and judiciously used; it requires, however, considerable address and intelligence to superintend aright this domestic department. It is an opinion, not unsupported by reason, that a child should be less indebted for its first ideas to books, than to nature: a book commonly carries with it an idea of abstraction, little congenial to the infant mind, that

loves to expatiate amid those objects of creation, which most powerfully strike the imagination, and is animated with wonder and delight while exploring the blue and boundless expanse of heaven; the moon walking in brightness amid the starry hosts; the splendour of the rising and setting sun, with all the varied magnificence of nature. Though to childish thought all is mystery, yet it has received the impress of grandeur, order, and beauty, and feels a kindred glow, which identifies it, as it were, with the scene. But the ever-flowing current of thought needs a wise control, and is in danger of running swiftly to waste, if it be not directed into its proper channels. As the infant cannot distinguish the antidote from the poison, so it rarely can discern good from evil; but if it behoves the parent to provide nutritious food for the body, much more is it expedient that the immortal spirit be supplied with that, on which its growth and sustenance depend.

So diversified are the human character and capacity, that it is not easy to determine the precise time when any particular branch of instruction should commence. Nature is here the safest guide; the light she offers will rarely mislead: curiosity seems to be her appointed signal for the communication of knowledge, and should ever precede that which is desirable and important, as the means of more effectually impressing it on the memory; and when curiosity is dormant, it may be excited by a disclosure of such interesting particulars, as may induce a desire for more information. In the abstruser studies of a more advanced age, additional stimuli may be imparted, by a display of the advantages, honour, and utility, attending it, with a well-contrasted picture of the disgrace and disadvantages of ignorance.

Fill and cram the infant mind with knowledge, seems to be the order of the day; whether it have power to digest it aright, is another and after consideration; the child must read as soon as it can lisp, and must, of course, learn every thing it is able to read. To the followers of such doctrine, it may sound

rather strange to assert, or even to suggest a doubt, that they are beginning at the wrong end; but they will concede that a good foundation ought to be laid where a superstructure is designed; which, in Education, is equivalent to its first or preparatory stage of training. The question is, whether this is best accomplished by imparting knowledge, storing the infant memory with miscellaneous information, or, by a preparatory course of discipline, rather to prepare the infant mind and faculties for the profitable reception of it?

Supposing, by way of illustration, that a child has been entrusted to the care of a person, who, during this early stage of instruction, has on all occasions, and on every subject, imparted all possible information; the consequence is, that a multiplicity of ideas, in rapid succession, has passed through the mind, or rather glanced on the imagination, of which no distinct trace remains; the infant mind being too weak and imperfect a medium to arrange or select its thoughts, rarely retains any thing but what has forcibly impressed the imagination, and which is, probably, the very thing we would obliterate from the memory: the result in this case would be, that, instead of the mind being duly prepared for making progressive advances in learning, it would rather resemble a confused chaos of ideas, without any definite character, and of knowledge (if it deserve the name), without its useful application; add to this, that a negative evil has been incurred, by confining the attention within false and artificial limits, thus excluding it from its more congenial and improving field of exercise.

But, supposing that we vary our plan, and make it our aim not to fill the mind with ideas, but to enable it to make itself master of one before it admits another; rather to impart the habit of fixing the attention, than to distract it by an endless variety; so to task the tender intellect, as may timely nourish the budding faculties; not to let the memory lie dormant, but so progressively to exercise it, as with a view rather to strengthen it for its future acquisitions, than for any present object; thus

gradually eliciting the powers of the mind, so as to prepare it for the right reception and digestion of the knowledge which, in its educational career, it is destined to receive.

If there be any quality which, from its immediate connection with human happiness, is entitled to a superior degree of estimation, it is a cheerful and well-regulated temper; and childhood is unquestionably the proper season for its cultivation. To promote this happy frame of mind, no pains should be spared, no care omitted; it is, in effect, the universal panacea; the great charm and antidote to the multiplied evils and vexations of the world, which are ever magnified and distorted by a contrary disposition, and is the only ingredient of power to infuse an uniform sweetness in the mixed cup of humanity. This "sunshine of the soul" brightens all within its cheering influence; nor is there any social or individual comfort that is not, in a great degree, dependent upon it: it enters into every action, shapes the happiness of every hour, and gives colouring and expression even to the ordinary train of thought.

Man is distinguished from man, no less by his temper and social disposition, than by those striking traits of character, arising from the more solid endowments of the mind. Genuine benignity has its seat in the heart, and inspires that urbanity of manners, which is a passport to universal favour; without its cordial influence, virtue would lose half its charms, and merit would lack its chief recommendation: its needful presence can alone render wisdom engaging; it is more available than force, and more persuasive than eloquence; it is the mainspring of social harmony, by whose kindly operation, the mind is prepared for the reception of all that is great and good.

If an amiable disposition be not in itself a virtue of the highest rank, it gives light and colouring to every noble quality, and is nearly allied to that "charity," so justly extolled by St. Paul, as superior to all other acquisitions in the sight of heaven, and without which, all human wisdom, knowledge, and power, are accounted as worthless and vain. Such are among the

advantages attending a spirit of Christian benevolence, and the exercise of the social affections; and hence it appears that this amiable quality, like godliness, is "profitable for all things," and no less essential to virtue than to happiness. By some, this happy temperament has been regarded as the partial gift of nature alone; but reason and experience equally show that it may be acquired, and that then only it assumes the character of a virtue, and becomes a principle of steady and uniform operation.

What is termed an easy temper, may sometimes be constitutional; and when stimulated by a concurrence of favourable circumstances, may pass for an habitual flow of good humour. When, by mismanagement, severity, and bodily infirmity, a child's mind is depressed and soured, it is deemed the unhappy inheriter of a bad temper; whereas the contrast is owing to circumstances alone, and in most cases, could we investigate the real cause of such difference, it would be found to originate in common coincidences, rather than in constitutional defect or peculiarity. That superficial gaiety which is dependent on animal spirits, ever fluctuates with its fortuitous support, and vanishes at the approach of privation and sickness, or the shock of disappointment; and is not to be compared with that cheerful and even temper, which is the effect of culture and discipline, based upon principle, and strengthened by reason, whence only it can derive true stability and worth.

If any thing were wanting to enhance the value of a good temper, it would be found in the contemplation of the unhappy effects resulting from a dark and malignant disposition, the bane of society, and the never-failing source of misery and crime. To suppose that any child is born with a confirmed evil bias, would be to accuse Heaven of injustice and cruelty; and so far is it from being true, that a perverse and corrupt temper is inherent in the infant breast, that we almost invariably find it susceptible of every good impression, and that

we have power to bend the pliant feelings of childhood at pleasure. So elastic is the infant mind, that it quickly recovers its tone, even after the severest suffering; nor is it till after protracted endurance, that perverseness becomes a confirmed feature in the character.

The all-wise Creator pronounced all his works to be good: he adapts the soil to the seed, and endows the human mind with its needful properties, but the means of improvement are with man; and in both cases the increase corresponds to the use of them. Why are children interested and delighted with the appearance of virtue, but because they have that moral principle within, that prompts the perception and love of it? How lively are their emotions, and how earnest their competitions; how quick their sense of praise; how joyous at success, and how sorrowful at shame and reproof; how affectionate their endearments: how grateful for kindness; and what natural eloquence in their artless appeal! Thus beautifully is nature reflected in the infant mind, and thus liberal is her provision for improvement! Of such costly materials, how goodly a fabric may be reared; on such a foundation, how noble a superstructure may be raised!

A good temper depends much on a sound and vigorous state of the faculties, which constitutes the health of the soul, and on which its pleasurable operation depends; hence the wisdom of inspiring a taste for such recreations as are most conducive to bodily and mental improvement. Truly has it been observed, that health and cheerfulness mutually beget each other, so close is the sympathy between them. By teaching children to "place their happiness where their praise is," an edifying source of pleasure is opened; and by connecting the idea of duty with that of happiness, Education gains a powerful auxiliary in the youthful breast. In proportion to the desire for approbation, will be the pleasure arising from it; consciousness of desert gives birth to that satisfaction which is founded in

reason, and in strength and purity surpasses every other. By multiplying the sources of rational delight, we not only widen the sphere of happiness, but exalt its character, and impart to the mind that intellectual bias, which is the surest means of making it permanent.

The gaiety inspired by the gratifications of sense, though sparkling, is but shallow; flowing with an uneven and interrupted current, and failing most in time of need; but the well-formed temper resembles the reservoir, whose healthful spring yields an unfailing supply for hourly use and refreshment. As the mighty river flows in the direction first imparted to it by the humble rill, so does the social current of life take its course from the early development of temper; and hence the necessity of controlling betimes those seemingly innocent but really important symptoms, that manifestly indicate its uture direction.

The main ingredients of human felicity are of the social kind; in the intercourse of the friendly affections are centred, not only the truest satisfactions, but in the greatest variety, and such as most powerfully and pleasurably affect the human heart. The words social and cheerful, have become synonymous, the quality of temper necessarily depending much on the state of the social affections; and hence the wisdom and importance of attention to them in their earlier stages: every social principle and tendency, every kind and generous affection, now cherished, becomes both the means of present happiness, and the surest pledge of its increase and continuance.

That first impressions are lasting, is an ancient and popular maxim; but, like many favourite truisms, though strictly true in a particular sense, is not equally so in its wider acceptation. Childish experience is commonly nothing but a series of impressions—a succession of ideas passing through the mind, whereof the last obliterates the former: it is open to all, but not capacious enough to retain many at once; and so long as it is free to choose, will naturally entertain such only

as are most agreeable. Such impressions as are habitually confirmed, and have been fixed in the mind by repetition, will be proportionably lasting; and in this sense it is, that "manners (implying habits) make the man."

The power of habit is sufficiently known: that "custom is a second nature," is a sentiment common to all times, and proclaimed in every language; its wonderful effects are daily seen in every possible variety: aided by perseverance, it is seemingly equal to all things, and conquers difficulties apparently insurmountable; hence the perfection of the manual arts, and excellence in all accomplishments: it is witnessed no less in those feats of agility that excite our astonishment, than in the nobler flights of intellect that kindle our admiration.

The wisdom and efficacy of applying such a power to the purposes of Education, are too obvious to need any argument: to get habit betimes on the right side, in matters of improvement, is to render all comparatively easy and pleasant. A good habit, early acquired, will extend its beneficial influence to the latest period of existence; but it must be perfectly formed, and grafted, as it were, into nature by continued repetition, or it cannot be strictly termed a habit. Repetition is, in effect, the grand arcanum of all solid improvement, without which, first impressions are no more lasting than characters traced on the snow, which the first sunbeam or the passing breeze may efface.

A retentive memory is a great help to knowledge, and, in the acquisition of languages, may be termed "the one thing needful." This is rarely the gift of nature, and is attainable only by the repeated exercise of its powers; but it is a faculty that amply repays the care bestowed on its cultivation; being wonderfully progressive, and if led at first by easy and well-timed degrees, will attain to great strength; whereas, by over-tasking its first efforts, the energetic tone of the mind will be paralyzed, and its future exertion discouraged. Practice is the sole means of perfection, and by perseverance alone is

endeavour crowned with success; but in every case it should be well-timed, and wisely measured, otherwise disgust and failure will probably ensue.

The longer a habit is delayed, the more difficult its acquisition becomes, and the more uncertain its operation. The formation of new and strange habits in after life, is a sort of violence to nature, that she seldom fails to retort by a reaction, returning with increased force to assert her supremacy, and resume her wonted dominion over the mind; hence the expediency of securing the powerful aid of habit betimes, in all those attainments whose utility renders them indispensable, or whose engaging qualities make them desirable. I shall close my remarks on this head by earnestly recommending the habit of early rising—a habit that is worth a hundred maxims, and connected with every thing that is estimable in life—a habit which, in early life, is as easy to acquire, as it is difficult at any subsequent period; and, probably, is more conducive to health, mental energy, and cheerfulness, than most other habits combined, where this one is wanting.

The mind of a child being, of itself, unequal to any great effort, needs a stimulus to rouse its powers to exertion: for this purpose, the passions are useful: hope and fear are ruling motives, and though opposite in their nature, may be made instrumental to the same end, but under very different circumstances. The hope of reward, associated as it is with the desire of praise (inherent in every breast), supplies the most animating and rational of all motives, and is commonly successful; whereas the depression of mind, caused by the dread of punishment, excites a painful struggle of the feelings in the accomplishment of the object, and is followed by an impression of disgust, which is not easily effaced. By the influence of hope, all the faculties of the soul are harmonized; by the ascendancy of fear, they are perplexed and deranged.

Nature, reason, and experience, combine to prove that kindly measures are ever the most salutary. Among the sages of

ancient as well as of modern times, we find none to advocate coercive measures, but as a final remedy when other means have failed. Punishment can be good, only as it remedies evil, and if it have not this its proper effect, is itself an evil; nor does the necessity for it justify indiscriminate severity: in every case it is requisite that the nature and degree of the punishment should be accurately measured to the offence.

There are few faults in which the mind has not a principal share, and the greater part are wholly its own; which is one of many reasons for mental, rather than corporal, correction. In ordinary things, the child whose reason is yet weak and defective, may be, experimentally, made sensible of its error; as, if it take delight in wantonly inflicting pain, it may, by the feeling of bodily pain, be made conscious of the wrong it has done; whereas the child of cunning is better chastised by superior cunning, and thus being outwitted, may be made to see the folly while suffering the consequences of duplicity. In common cases of indolence or negligence, encouragement should first be held out in every inviting form; when kindness and persuasion fail of their effect, stronger measures become requisite to enforce obedience, but only in cases of extreme contumacy or duplicity, and when other means have been tried and found unavailing.

When corporal punishment becomes indispensable, the effect is destroyed by delay: a child should also be made to understand the nature and magnitude of its fault, and the penalty justly attached to it; by comparing of which, with that inflicted, it may plainly appear to have been dictated by a lenient spirit, and not by severity: a well-timed idea of mercy thus introduced into the mind, will be seasonably cherished; and in all cases, to insure the good effects of reproof, it should be blended with the show of regret rather than of anger. Different minds are not equally affected by similar motives; but while a spark of generous passion exists in the breast, the proper stimulus cannot be wanting; and so long as gentle measures have any

power, not only humanity, but reason and justice, decide in their favour.

Supposing that, within a stated time, a child has a task to accomplish, in which, as is often the case, it feels little or no interest, it might be doubted whether a threat or a promise would be the best means of kindling the requisite exertion; and, in deciding on this point, many would be guided in their opinion (and with reason) by the pupil's disposition. There is, however, another consideration, too weighty to be overlooked; viz. the state of the mind and feelings during the allotted period, whether long or short: to ascertain this, we need only consult our own breasts. If the effect has been produced by fear, how forced and unnatural appears the effort, and how unhappy the condition of a mind exerting itself under its agitating influence!—every pleasurable idea has been eclipsed by the dark-boding threat, which, like a spectre, has haunted it; disgust strikes deep its baneful root within, and the thorn of discontent long rankles in the heart.

Turn we to contemplate the more pleasing portrait of the youth applying himself with alacrity to the performance of his duty; the animating pleasure held out to him is doubly sweet as a reward; and he is stimulated by the delightful anticipation of honour and success: the laudable ambition thus fostered in his breast, elicits his best endeavours, and, having surmounted the difficulty, he enjoys the triumph of conscious merit. By such means the mind is trained to honourable enterprise; and even where indolence leaves little room for reward, by rewarding that little, a desire for greater reward will be induced, and superior desert will be the consequence. Success is inspiring, and renders exertion delightful; and Hope is its handmaid, invigorating all the active faculties of the soul, and stimulating such as are dormant.

Whatever a child receives in the shape of reward, should have something better than surface to recommend it—some character of utility, which should be explained as the true

ground of its estimation. The inexperienced mind cannot be too early taught to discriminate between realities and appearances: childish admiration being readily excited by what is merely superficial, its worthlessness should be so plainly depicted, that contempt may take place of the false impression. The beneficial tendency of thus rectifying the reason betimes, is obvious; for so admirable is the structure of the human mind, that if the judging faculty be warily guided in its first essays, its innate energy will be as wings to aid its rising power; and having commenced its ascent, it will continue to rise till it attain to its meridian height.

*Of all the means provided by nature for rightly training the infant mind, maternal influence is, doubtless, the kindliest and best; and few, if any, were they fully aware of its nature and extent, would be found to adopt any plan which prematurely draws a line of separation between the mother and the child: if well weighed, it appears to be a violation of one of the most sacred laws of Nature, and an outrage on common humanity; depriving a human being of that privilege, which is his birthright, and on which his virtue and happiness in a great measure depend. By the adoption of means so unnatural, the parent would indeed be disburdened of a temporary yoke, which the wisdom of Divine Providence has seen fit to impose, which, while it presses with a weight of responsibility and care, operates at the same time with a secret but forcible charm on the parental heart, thus bringing its own reward. In all matters of a social bearing, and in this especially, good heed is requisite, lest, by rending the ties of natural sympathy, we innovate on the plans of Heaven, and, by a dangerous experiment, interrupt the established harmony of society.

With a child, maternal influence is the sweetest and most

* These remarks are not pointed at infant schools, which are designed to remedy a social evil, and for the accommodation of the working classes, whose time and attention are wholly occupied; thus rescuing their children, in many cases, from the fatal consequences of inevitable neglect.

constraining power, the first and best means of improvement; between the mother and her child there exists so holy a union, that of them it may truly be said, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." With infants, we should be most careful not to impair the first susceptibilities of nature, but rather to cherish them as the close allies and guardians of the social virtues. Were infants deprived of this maternal influence, humanity would certainly be no gainer, either as respects parental or filial affection; the heart, in both cases, would want the sweetest corrective of its bitterness, and the most potent charm to counteract its native asperity: the child, whose heart was thus estranged from the exercise of its best feelings, and so untimely weaned from its kindliest support, would secretly pine its loss, and a restless discontent would fill the aching void. Neither would the mother, in most cases, fare better, whose truest happiness is centred in her duty, whose purest delight consists in tending and cherishing her offspring, whose endearing and innocent society is the sweetest solace in the hour of affliction, and has power to calm all the tumults of the breast. Exile the infant from its home, and the domestic charm is gone;—what then becomes of those bright and blameless hours, and of that endearing intercourse? Will the present or future happiness of the parent or the child, be in any wise promoted by the separation; or rather, must not the experiment be detrimental to the virtue and happiness of both?

The premature separation of a child from the family circle, which is, as it were, its natural stock, may possibly tend to greater inconveniences than can be foreseen: it may with reason be suspected, that the early initiation of the human mind into formal and uniform systems, would occasion a corresponding identity of character;* but should it even tend to impair its individuality and peculiar characteristics, such an effect might not work well in society.

* Alluding to establishments for the reception of infants of the wealthier classes. The merits of infant schools are discussed in the following essay.

A diversity in tastes, character, and pursuits, is essential to the well-being and good order of the community; and whence arise these peculiarities? If not inherent, they have their birth in early associations and impressions; and if they are inherent, it is by these alone that they are nurtured and matured, and it is, doubtless, from these that the pliant mind receives its ruling bias. Most families are distinguished by some prevailing qualities, which are often observable even in the youngest members; and whence that similarity of taste, which induces rivalry and excellence in favourite pursuits, if it be not communicated during the unreserved intercourse that reigns in the domestic circle, which is doubtless the fittest school for the susceptibilities of childhood, if it be desirable to preserve family characteristics entire.

What is termed a family likeness, extends further, perhaps, than is commonly suspected: many and remarkable have been the instances of peculiar mental qualities distinguishing the same family for many generations; but allow the tender scion to be severed from the parent stock, and the surrounding branches among which it flourished; remove it from its natural and vital support, and let it be grafted on a foreign stem; its nature, and the quality of its fruit, will necessarily be changed, and the original design of nature be frustrated: much more will the human fruit be changed and degenerate, that is transplanted from its native bed, to languish in a strange soil; and thus is broken a charm of nameless power, while no equivalent is insured.

In the bosom of its family, a child is in the centre of affection, and is, as it were, the focus of goodly impressions: it looks around with confidence and delight, is greeted on every side with smiles, and animated by the endearments of those whom it loves, and whose tastes and manners it naturally imbibes. Another advantage connected with home, is, that what is there presented to its observation, is peculiarly adapted to its improvement; nothing low, disgusting, or too puerile,

is to be apprehended in a well-conducted family; where also a gradation of ages commonly presents a progressive series of examples; wherein the young may take pattern from the next in seniority. A child naturally profits from familiar intercourse with companions of superior age and information: in the domestic circle the youngest is an object of interest with every member of it; and all are ready to impart the needful counsel and instruction. How worthy of a wise and benevolent Providence does such an arrangement appear, and how admirably adapted to the gradual development of the human powers!

To maternal influence succeeds parental example, completing what has thus been happily begun; for the good impression of the former will either be confirmed or cancelled by the latter. Parental example perpetually sways the mind of a child; from the dawn of observation it has been a guiding-star, whose influence is irresistible, and cannot, without violence to nature, be averted; it is rooted in the heart, and lives in the memory, when it has faded from the view. The brightness of conviction that shines in the example of a parent, is a sacred and inextinguishable light; powerful when present, and eloquent when absent; nature approves and seals it with a charm that time may not dissolve: even when visibly withdrawn and eclipsed by the shades of death, it is fresh in the recollection: mingling with the tenderness of regret, and embalmed by the holiest affections of the heart, its image will be doubly dear and doubly cherished.

The best precepts will insure no durable impression, till called into operation by the agency of example. We may indeed, at will, transfer in a great measure our sentiments and feelings to the youthful mind; we may select and arrange our thoughts with wisdom, and communicate them in language the most persuasive and in the most engaging manner; we may even make the desired impression, and full conviction may attend it; but by such means to fix it, transcends our skill: if unsupported by example, it will share the common fate of juvenile

convictions, and, after its brief date, be consigned to oblivion. Nor is it to be expected that it should terminate otherwise: man, from his birth, is an imitative creature, and though counsel may give direction to his present thoughts, he must be stimulated to action by example, whose silent but powerful appeal he spontaneously obeys, and which alone can perfect what precept has begun. The one may conduct him within sight of virtue; but the other must put him in possession of it. As Gideon of old, who said not to his followers, Behold the enemy—go and conquer; but, "Look on me, and do likewise:" so must it be done with youth, for it is the leading propensity of their nature to look on the present example of their parents and guardians, and unhesitatingly make it their guide.

The good example of a father is as a guardian angel to his son; while a corrupt one, like an evil genius, becomes his betrayer. By action alone, the hidden counsels of the heart are revealed; the true test of character is to be found in conduct; and virtue must be habitual before it can be exemplary: but, if the language of the lips be found at variance with the sentiments of the heart, the thin disguise of professions will be wholly unavailing: unsupported by any visible evidences, they will but yield the stronger proof of insincerity, and eloquence will serve only to magnify inconsistency.

The judgment of youth, in common intercourse, is often little inferior to that of their seniors; and the best counsels, if mixed with deceit, will, sooner or later, meet the merited contempt that follows detection of imposture: suspicion, a most dangerous guest, will take possession of the mind, and confidence will for ever depart. The cause of truth is not thus easily betrayed; nor will deception long escape the observant eye of youth, jealous of its own inexperience, and eager to repel imposition. Vainly shall we lecture them on the obligations of religion, if they see us negligent of the duties it enjoins; or descant in measured terms on the vanity of earthly things, while our aims and desires manifestly run towards them.

What avails it to tell them of the faithful care of a gracious and beneficent Providence, while at the same time, with a superfluous anxiety we are anticipating its bounty, and labouring for the supply often of unreal wants, as earnestly and painfully as if we believed it not; thus openly setting the seal to our own duplicity!

Nature, that does nothing in vain, imparts to every human breast some ruling bias or propensity, which, like the finger of Heaven, seems to point out its destined path: by obeying its direction, we further the unerring plans of Providence; whereas, by disregarding it, and tracing an opposite line of action, we abuse the power confided to us, and in some measure counteract the plain intention of heaven. But, notwithstanding the manifest absurdity of predetermining the pursuits and course of life of a child whose mental bias is yet undeveloped, how common is it for men, in their aerial speculations, to chalk out an imaginary career, such as ambition or worldly policy may suggest, even for heirs unborn! The motive may be amiable, but its aim is misdirected; the fate, therefore, of such visionary schemes, must often be miscarriage: to errors of this nature many have had serious cause to ascribe the ill success that has followed them through life.

It is doubtless the disinterested affection of the parent, that prompts the plan for the honour and happiness of the child; but the laudable intention is frustrated by omitting the requisite means, without which the best motives may be productive of the worst effects. The generous heart has need of the judging head; and the stronger the affection of the parent, the greater is the need of prudence for its guidance: equally amiable in design, though more unhappy often in its consequences, is the undue solicitude of parents, to make such provision for their offspring, as may place them above the reach of want and dependence. The motive is praiseworthy, and even assumes the shape of a sacred duty; but the great question is, how may it best be accomplished? Will it be by crowning

them with fortune; by making their circle of indulgences as wide as possible, and securing to them, as far as we can, all the means of sensual and selfish gratification? This would be to render them dependent in the truest sense of the word, by subjecting them to a thousand artificial wants and imaginary distresses. Every habitual luxury becomes as one of the necessaries of life, and rises in demand upon every gratification: and thus are the votaries of indulgence enslaved by imperious necessities of their own creating, and plagued by a multitude of disgusts unknown to others, who, from choice or necessity, have learned to submit to the restraints of temperance.

Self-centred indulgence ever ministers ready food to the passions, and the affluence that insures a constant supply, proves often an active and powerful agent in the service of those arch-betrayers of human peace and virtue. Who, indeed, is able to foretell the gigantic growth of vice, habitually nourished, or to compute its ultimate consequences? Man is too frail a creature, especially in youth, to be trusted with the dangerous power of self-guidance and unlimited gratification, which might at once subvert his integrity, and frustrate the purpose of his being; wisely, therefore, is it withheld, or dispensed in sparing measure, and rather as a seasonable refreshment than as a substantial good, or as his allotted portion in his probationary state. Lawful pleasures, as they are freely given, may doubtless as freely be enjoyed, so long as the line of distinction is preserved between the use and abuse of them; for although it be true that no innocent pleasure is in its own nature hurtful, yet, blended as it is with human frailty, it too frequently proves so, as experience can sufficiently attest.

The mind of man is speedily corrupted by continued enjoyment; the faculties, benumbed by sloth and sensuality, quickly lose all relish and perception of that superior delight, which active virtue can alone impart. Acquired wealth is the proper reward of vigorous and virtuous exertion; but inherited fortune,

by removing the main stimulus to laudable efforts, must tend, in some measure, to counteract the intention of heaven. The oracles of truth declare that it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth, or till experience and reflection have matured his judgment; and well has this inspired precept been approved; it has stood the test of protracted ages, and claims the strong support and concurrent testimony of history, ancient and modern, sacred and profane.

From the ample record of the past, we gather the richest truths, and the brightest examples, to nourish and fix our wavering virtue. Our convictions of right and wrong are confirmed by the view of their practical operation in the conduct and affairs of men, as we weigh and compare them at leisure; and take example at the well-earned fame of wisdom, or the marked retribution of folly. Among the brightest names there registered, we find those who were disciplined in the school of adversity, who perseveringly surmounted the steep ascent of virtue, and successfully contended with their adverse fortune, ere they were crowned with honour, who had learned and practised the art of self-government (the first lesson of wisdom), and commenced their career of triumph with the conquest of their passions.

If such considerations had their due weight in the parental breast, much needless anxiety might be spared, and many would be less enamoured of schemes so fallacious as those must ever prove, that make the chief good of life, and their highest duty, to consist in a plentiful supply of fortune for their offspring, to whom it may, in the event, be a snare rather than a blessing, unless they have been pre-endowed with moral courage, sufficient to withstand the thousand dangers and temptations that follow in its train. From errors of this class, how has society, in every age, been burdened with useless and unhappy members! for not only is the possession of superfluous wealth the bane and ruin of the pampered and ignorant; the

best principled and best disposed, are but too often ensnared and betrayed by its seducing influence.

In this age of refined levity and boasted freedom, not very common is the juvenile stoicism that is temptation-proof, and that can look with a cold indifference on the varied attractions that surround it, and at a time when exemplary virtue is as rare as vice is current and fashionable; yet to such is the command of fortune intrusted, ere they have acquired the more needful command of themselves. Such errors, with their attendant evils, are the common fruit of that short-sighted wisdom, which is ever prone to overreach itself, in its vain endeavour to remove the restraints which, for salutary purposes, a higher wisdom has imposed.

At a time like the present, far excelling all others in the diffusion of evangelical truth, did practice keep pace with profession, little need would there be to hold up to our youth, as motives to emulation, the heroism of heathens, and the virtues of times long gone by, or to recapitulate the weighty arguments that crowd upon us, in favour of an early and genuine spirit of piety, and of the many and solid advantages resulting from it, both to the individual, and to society at large. The necessity for a more decided attention to religion, is but too apparent in the converse and deportment of the rising generation, whose notions on the subject, generally speaking, it would be rather difficult to define.

To whatever cause the religious defection of our youth is owing, certain it is, that the evidences of a true piety are not among their leading characteristics: seemingly they either know or care little about the matter, and generally appear to be total strangers to its spirit and power: we may sometimes trace its form, but it is the shadow rather than the substance; mostly it is but a confusion of ideas, floating in the imagination; or if rightly conceived in the head, rarely does it sink to the heart, where only it can take root and flourish! The

paucity of practical zeal commonly evinced in so good a cause, adds little to our characters as Christians, as fathers, or as men.

In this sublunary scene of blended show and deception, where our senses are so closely allied to the perishing objects that surround them, an absent religion has great need of a present advocate in the breast of the young to counteract their ascendancy. Not only is the homage of the youthful heart the most acceptable incense to Heaven; the genuine piety of innocence is claimed as its prized and peculiar tribute, its sacred and inalienable right.

Could the parental eye pierce the veil of futurity, and anticipate the change in their estimate of things, when a few years, with their cares and burdens, have revolved and passed for ever away, how would the seemingly mountainous vanities of the present time melt away and disappear at the presence of truth; and how would realities brighten in the view!—conviction, arising like the sun, would show every thing in its genuine hue and form, and stamp it with its true character and value; delusions would vanish as dreams, and nought, save the imperishable things of eternity, would remain. The perfection of wisdom would then appear in that parental care, which, in its estimate of things temporal, looks to their remotest consequences, and, rising superior to present motives, consecrates its best talent to the cause of religion and virtue.

The human soul, in this its state of exile and darkness, buried, as it were, amid the countless vanities that flesh is heir to, and surrounded by defilement, may be compared to the diamond in the mine, where it is fashioned by the secret and wonder-working hand of nature: its intrinsic worth and beauty are not impaired by the grosser matter that surrounds it; but its lustre proclaims its destination. When brought to light, and polished by the skill of man, it ranks with its brilliant rivals, and graces its appointed sphere; enhancing the splen-

dours of royalty, and revelling in the varied reflection of a diadem. Its earthly state is to the human soul, what the mine is to the gem, with this grand distinction, that the stone, how costly soever, may lie hidden and neglected till the end of time; whereas the immaterial spirit, no created power can conceal, nor can aught arrest its progressive career: at its appointed time it must ascend to its native element, and take possession of its unfading inheritance.

ESSAY III.

A PHILOSOPHICAL THEORY OF EDUCATION, GROUNDED ON EXPERIENCE AND THE ECONOMY OF NATURE; COMPRISING AN ESTIMATE OF THE HUMAN CHARACTER AND POWERS; WITH AN ATTEMPT TO INVESTIGATE AND APPLY THE PROGRESSIVE PRINCIPLE—COMPARATIVE MERITS OF MODERN SCHOLASTIC ESTABLISHMENTS; WITH ACCOMPANYING REFLECTIONS ON THE YOUTHFUL TEMPERAMENT—OBSERVATIONS ON MODES OF COERCIVE DISCIPLINE—EMULATION THE PROPER AGENT OF IMPROVEMENT—PAROCHIAL AND SIMILAR ESTABLISHMENTS—INFANT SCHOOLS—THEIR MERITS AND TENDENCY.

WHATEVER difference of opinion may have existed among mankind with respect to modes and systems of Education, there has, in every age and nation, been but one prevailing sentiment as to its expediency; and this general conviction, while it loudly proclaims its utility, makes it the duty of all to promote it according to their ability; and, doubtless, it behoves all who make reason and religion their guide, all who profess to be actuated by the worthiest motives, whether private or public, cordially to concur in so beneficial and patriotic a design. The numerous scholastic establishments which now form so conspicuous a feature in the system of British Education, manifestly owe their increase to the liberal spirit with which they have been supported, and afford the strongest indication of popular opinion, as to the propriety and necessity of adopting such decided and effectual means, as may best secure, both individually and to society at large, the many and solid advantages derivable from such a source.

Whether the beneficial result be adequate to the just expectation of a generous and confiding people, is questionable; one thing, howev r, is certain, that if it does not work well, the failure is a proof of defect in the system, and it is to that the remedy must be applied. It is a serious, though not a new nor uncommon cause of regret, that Education, which is the proper and appointed means of eradicating whatever is evil in human nature, and of cherishing all that is good in it, should, by any mismanagement, not only fail of its desired effect, but give birth to error and strengthen prejudices, which are always the more pernicious for being sanctioned; it is, however, a charge but too well founded; and hence it so frequently happens, that, upon reviewing and comparing what it has done, with what it has left undone, the emotions excited in the parental breast, are as painful as they are unavailing.

The season for Education, once lost, is never regained: to sacrifice lightly, therefore, the youthful prime, is as cruel and unjust, as it is costly—defrauding a human soul of its natural right and most valuable privilege, by the ignorance or error of others. If there be any one period of life which surpasses every other in worth and importance, it is unquestionably that which has a direct influence upon, and shapes the well-being of, the whole; and such is the time allotted for Education, which, if wisely improved, is the happy means of all that we can rationally desire; but when misused, becomes the prolific source of incalculable mischief.

The right instruction of his children is, therefore, a work in which a wise man will be so much in earnest, that the means he adopts may be assumed as a striking commentary on his character: above prejudice, he deems nothing unworthy of his consideration that has a professed connection with it; but will rather examine and try it in its various views and bearings, well knowing its import to be such, as to entitle it to the most comprehensive and impartial survey.

Rightly we form our estimate of Education, as of a tree, by

the fruit it yields; we readily approve what is choice and excellent, and commend the tree which produces it, but it is on the supposition that all the fruit it bears is of the like quality; but should three-fourths of the fruit be sour, we reserve our praise, regarding the effect but as a forced or partial effort of nature, and set but little value on so uncertain a production. The same reasoning applies equally to plans of tuition; for wherever excellence is found in proportions so rare as to seem exceptions to, rather than the necessary result of the system adopted, it lends colour to a suspicion that it is essentially defective, and reason will naturally look around for a remedy.

So complicated is Education, as it now exists in this country, that it would be difficult for the most intelligent observer to reduce his ideas on the subject to any definable shape. In almost every establishment, the principal adopts a system of his own. Grammar-schools, and a few others, may form exceptions; but with the great majority this is actually the case. Every one being at perfect liberty to model a system after his own mind, naturally avails himself of his prerogative; and, deeming himself not less intelligent than his professional rival, shapes it in compliance with his particular views, and prides himself most on those peculiar features, which, in his opinion, constitute its chief merit, while they serve also to distinguish it from every other.

Hence it appears that Education, in its collective sense, cannot with any propriety be denominated a system, as it evidently comprises a greater diversity of forms, or systems, than can possibly be enumerated; not only differing from each other, but changing, often, their individual features with every new professor. Among so great a variety of plans, some will succeed, and others fail; some may be highly meritorious, and others partially defective; consequently, to level any indiscriminate censure at the many, for the demerits of the few, would be a manifest injustice, tending to confound all distinction between right and wrong: candour and caution are therefore

highly requisite in forming a judgment; for it is quite evident that since the best derived information can apply only to a limited extent, therefore no general criterion can be justly deduced from it.

Keeping in view the design proposed, it will be needful, for the present, to waive further discussion on these points. In taking a broad and philosophical survey of the subject, detached and partial considerations ought, in fairness, to follow, rather than precede, the investigation of general and leading principles. In the solution of vital and important questions, it behoves the inquirer after truth, to ascend first to its highest sources; he will seek to nature and philosophy, and take counsel of religion and experience, and avail himself of the light derivable from all, for the more certain guidance of fallible reason. For this end, it will be desirable to take a brief but rational estimate of the nature, character, and powers of man, as also of those fixed laws of nature to which he is subject, and to what extent he is influenced by their operation: all philosophical reasoning on the subject pre-supposes a clear knowledge of these primary points; whence, by a gradual descent through its minor details, less room will remain for the intrusion of error.

To delineate man's nature, as exemplified by facts and experience, is but to draw a picture of that frailty, which enters into every part of its composition: whatever be his rank or fortune, this is his certain inheritance: whatever gifts he may receive from nature, this will ever accompany them. The honourable and the base are, in this respect, on a level; nor has the greatest monarch any pre-eminence above the meanest slave. Wisdom and knowledge, no less than ignorance and folly, are subject to its power; nor does that earthly virtue exist, that can bestow exemption from it. Wealth but adds to the wants of man, rendering him more dependent on the will of others for his hourly accommodations. From the beginning to the end of time, all flesh is heir to frailty; and from the cradle to the tomb, it is man's inseparable companion.

The mind, by habitually sympathising with its frail yoke-fellow, partakes of all its discouraging imperfections; hence its noblest designs are often sullied, and their progress and operation constantly impeded. Man's Godlike attribute—his rational and independent will—is perverted often by his innate irresolution; his firmest resolves are speedily shaken; and hence, for lack of constancy, his best intentions terminate in failure; and even were he possessed of all the virtues in perfection, they could not insure his success, nor place him beyond the reach of accident. One hour we behold him puffed up with a vain and towering hope, and the next cast down and grovelling with as vain despair. He maintains no virtue without a contest; nor can subdue a vice without a long and painful struggle; and thus his mind is the seat of perpetual warfare. He oft abuses his reason, and is deceived in turn, mistaking the counterfeit for the true. Instead of conquering his passions by the aid of reason, he allows her to be taken captive by each in turn; and oft employs the latter part of life in retracing the steps of the former.

Such are the common indications of human weakness, and its attendant consequences, which it is the business of Education to counteract, by discipline, by habits of reflection, by strengthening the mind, and rectifying its views; for in proportion as ignorance prevails, it gives the lead to passion, and marks the character with inconsistency. The contemplation of human frailty would indeed be humiliating, were we not to extend our view to the ulterior design of Providence, in making human weakness the bond to which society chiefly owes its stability. In this mixed state of good and ill, it is evidently, on the whole, the best and wisest arrangement, opposing the only effectual barrier against the fatal inroads of the wild and destructive passions: pride and arrogance are humbled, and the mad career of guilt arrested by it. But if, notwithstanding this wise provision, it is still found that evil and mischief bear oft a preponderating sway, what would be the consequence

were this well-timed restraint removed? Could villany act unchecked, and, hardening in its own strength, protract its schemes for ages, with impunity, presumptuous vice and folly, with giant strides, would overrun the earth, and peace and virtue would find no resting-place under the sun. Visibly then, in this appointment, we may trace the divine and overruling Hand which operates in all, and is ever deducing real good from seeming evil.

From the consideration of the natural constitution of man, we turn to that of his character, which, to depict aright, requires not, perhaps, the colouring and skill of a master-hand. Doubtless we must begin by placing inconsistency in the foreground, as it seems naturally and necessarily to grow out of his frailty as its root, and prevails commonly in much the same degree. In every gradation of human society, the inconsistency of man appears in striking and legible characters; it runs through the whole tenor of his life, misleading him in his views, and marring often his best actions and designs. We find that he may possess every sentiment of virtue, and yet hardly be exempted from a single vice. Alternately we see him hasting to contrary extremes: at one time, bent on the most exalted views, and pursuing them by the most honourable means; at another, adopting the most sordid measures in the prosecution of a disgraceful object; serious about trifles, and trifling about serious things; and, from a mistaken selfishness, even sacrificing future and momentous considerations to a fleeting gratification, that mocks his present sense.

Aptly has man been termed the creature of circumstances: borne unresistingly on the tide of popular and prevailing vanity, whirled about by all its eddies, and the constant sport of its restless current—how strong is his infatuation! His heart, that warmly responds to the call of truth, he rashly offers up at the altar of passion; while between his words and his deeds, his convictions and his conduct, there is a perpetual warfare. To-day he prizes life above all things; his heart and affections

seemingly centre in its avocations; and on its probable continuance he builds his fondest hopes: to-morrow, disgusted, he cuts it short, or defrauds it of half its term, by a reckless intemperance; what his heart approves, he often relinquishes for the sake of that which his conscience condemns; and pays external homage to the majesty of religion, yet turns his back on her at the beck of sensuality. When contaminated by vice, though conscious of the frailty, he assumes the self-importance of virtue; and sensible of the deformity of guilt, sedulously conceals its features beneath a thick veil of artifice. Feelingly he deprecates the horrors of war, and, with the same breath, eulogizes perhaps, as a patriot, the arch-destroyer, who immolates his fellow-men by thousands at the polluted shrine of ambition: so true is the maxim, that "to err is human;" and such a medley of contradictions do we discover in the character of man.

These striking traits of inconsistency are rendered but too familiar by daily experience; and in the public journals, no less than in history, we have a never-failing fund. Such is man even in civilized and Christian states; in polished society the base coin becomes current, and passes for sterling because it is richly gilt: vice there receives a gloss and an edge that renders it doubly mischievous; and it is a humiliating truth, that known and detected profligacy is even surpassed by those darker shades that elude our search, and lie deeply concealed within the foldings of the heart. Neither are such errors involuntary: man's unhappiness is commonly wilful; he chooses to wander in darkness, and closes his eyes against the friendly light of religion, deliberately preferring his own crooked and slippery ways, to the safe and peaceful path, which the wisdom and goodness of the Great Redeemer of mankind has compassionately marked out for him.

Amid these wild growths of inconsistency, the mind would be endlessly perplexed, were not the prospect seasonably relieved by an agreeable contrast, in those bright exceptions of

eminent worth and goodness, that in some measure dispel the gloom, while they exalt, no less than they adorn and bless, humanity. The heights of virtue, as well as the depths of vice, lie within the extremes of human conduct; and the mental eye reposes with unalloyed pleasure on the "excellent of the earth," whose virtues claim the homage of the heart, and whose intelligence and usefulness have graced their names with honourable and merited distinction. Such examples, while they point out to the youthful aspirant the road to true glory, show the prize in its fairest colours, and, by first winning the heart, more effectually stimulate its ardour, and influence its affections. Such admirable natures may be rare, in comparison with the bulk of mankind, but they are to be prized accordingly; resembling the isolated oases in the Eastern deserts, those bright spots of verdure, that appear like enchanted isles in the sandy waste, surprising the traveller with their fertility and beauty.

Though it be true that human society often presents a dark and doubtful aspect, yet it would be easy to show, that this seeming chaos of moral confusion is pregnant with all the principles of order, not the mere necessary result of a probationary state, but of the highest and indispensable utility, being essentially conducive to that varied and constant exercise of the active and passive virtues, without which the character of man could never arrive at perfection; consequently it forms the necessary part of a wise and universal plan: the mind is set upon its guard, and all its energies are roused into action by the doubtful nature of that human agency with which it is identified, and of those various circumstances by which it finds itself surrounded: man is thus disciplined to all wisdom, and learns, experimentally, that uniform peace depends on uniform integrity; that all vice contains the seeds of unhappiness; and that, eventually, in the constituted order of things, "whatsoever a man soweth, the same shall he also reap."

As the weary adventurer, disappointed in his fruitless wan-

derings, warned by past escapes, and apprehensive of the storms and dangers that still threaten his path, turns to the first humble shelter, as a welcome refuge from the gathering tempest; so the erring votary of worldly interest and pleasure, after escaping the poison of the one, and the precipices of the other, at length seeks the asylum of content in the safe, though humbler, path of virtue, there finding wisdom, and enjoying long-lost repose, he desires to wander no more; disgusted with the inconstant round of heartless pleasures and pursuits, he becomes consistent; and this consistency having taken deep root in conviction, is of a nature not easily to be eradicated. Thus it is that man is disciplined by needful experience, which is least painful and most beneficial to such as are duly prepared for the part they must sustain, by a sound and enlightened education, which rises in our estimation in proportion to our conviction of the weakness and instability of the human character.

We now come to the consideration of the intellectual powers of man, to the contemplation of a field of boundless extent, and varied aspect, although the generous nature of the soil is strongly attested by the success which follows the active hand of culture. Here we view with admiration those bright and towering eminences, that impart a grandeur to the prospect, reflecting the light of science in countless rays of utility and glory;—here, unsatiated, we may contemplate the splendid array of talent in its diversified forms, and survey, with honest pride, those master-spirits of their times, who, rising superior to their inherent frailty, have left behind them a well-earned and deathless fame; whose mental vigour rendered them superior to material nature; and though health, and even life, became the forfeit, it was a pure and costly sacrifice, a generous self-devotion, possessing all the merit of a free-will offering at the shrine of truth and virtue. Nobly intent on higher objects, they heeded not the premature decay of their earthly tabernacles; their sole aim and ambition centering in

the applause and esteem of their generation and of posterity, as the end and reward of their valuable labours.

Gratifying as it is to the philanthropist to dwell on the pleasing side of the human character, truth bids us turn our view awhile from these glittering heights, which lie scattered amid the broad wastes and barren levels that fill the space between, presenting an unsightly contrast, and sufficiently humbling to human vanity. Capacious as are the powers of the human mind, when duly elicited, yet, where the agency of this needful culture is wanting, they are often apparently dormant and powerless; and such is plainly the case with by far the greater portion of the human race. In taking a fair estimate of the amount of human intelligence, all partial and flattering deductions are to be avoided; nor is the judgment to be biased by individual excellence, instanced in men gifted with great natural powers, strengthened by a judicious cultivation. Such advantages falling, comparatively, to the lot of few, afford no just criterion for the many, though they yield a manifest proof of the human capabilities, and a powerful argument for their diligent improvement.

When we contemplate the map of the world, comprising in one view the entire human species, how comparatively insignificant appears that portion of it which we term civilized; and of the population of these highly-favoured spots, how scanty a proportion enjoy a competent share of that knowledge, by which human nature is truly ennobled and made rationally happy! If we turn our view to the vast and densely populated regions of the torrid zone, the boundless plains of the East, and the savage tribes of the Western world, we behold, for the most part, a heathen and barbarous population, degraded by an absurd and debasing superstition; the habitual slaves of sensuality and its concomitant evils—sloth, ignorance, and inhumanity. The picture is not flattering, but in it we see our superiority, and learn to appreciate the intellectual advantages

we enjoy; while reason may find salutary exercise in tracing the causes that combine to produce so wide a diversity.

In some highly-favoured parts of the globe, man seems, occasionally, to be scarce less than angelic in his nature and attainments; in others, we see him differing little from the brutes, save in his stature and his vices; cunning only to devise mischief, and ignorant of the simplest elements of knowledge; satiating his brutal rage, and yet more brutish appetite, in the blood of his fellow-man. Between these extremes we may observe the human powers varying and keeping pace with the progress of civilized intercourse, and the consequent spread of information; and hence arise the strongest arguments in favour of Education, and the universal dissemination of all useful and rational learning.

Truly has it been remarked, that vice and ignorance prevail most where the pure light of Christianity has never penetrated; and it may, by the way, be observed, that the conviction of this truth, which has often kindled the zeal of Christians for the advancement of truth and the promotion of happiness, has repeatedly failed of its well-meant and praiseworthy object from error in the means, and been rendered ineffectual, because, to use the words of scripture, it was a "zeal not according to knowledge." Civilization should, doubtless, be permitted to take the lead, or at least progress hand in hand with religion; the savage mind should be softened by social intercourse, and thus gradually prepared for the permanent and profitable reception of a system of truth and virtue so sublime. Christianity is the crown of civilization; but vain, surely, must be the attempt to graft a pure and spiritual religion on the wild and degenerate stock of unpruned barbarism, which would, indeed, resemble the folly of casting pearls before swine.

They who have studied the rude character of the uncivilized pagan, will readily concede the necessity of beginning the work of reformation, by gradually removing and eradicating his

numerous and obstinate prejudices. In the untutored heathen we find strong animal passions unused to control, confirmed habits of vice, and inveterate prepossessions. Is a mind thus enslaved by the grossest sensuality, and blinded by ignorance, the fit receptacle of a religion, whose leading requisites are a sound faith and a sincere holiness,—things which he has neither ideas rightly to comprehend, nor words properly to express? or can it, in other words, be deemed reasonable to send Christianity into such a wilderness, without a messenger to prepare the way before it—without the previous requisites for its right reception—without such a preparation as may insure it a welcome, and perpetuate its establishment? Naturally, however, as these suggestions seem to spring out of the subject, to pursue them further, in this place, would be only protracting a digression.

From this brief and imperfect sketch of the nature and powers of man, and of the imperfection that pervades every part of his character; having seen how prone he is to error, how defective in knowledge, and how inconsistent in conduct, and so continually at variance with himself, that even his actions afford no direct clue to his motives; it obviously becomes the main business of Education to counteract this characteristic frailty, which forms so universal and leading a feature in human nature, by discipline, by habit, and, above all, by bringing the weighty motives of religion to bear on the conduct; for it is evident that, without this, the mere cultivation of the mental powers would but give additional strength to inconsistency, and render human frailty and folly more striking.

For a solution of the seeming difficulties that grow out of the human temperament, we must, of necessity, look to a higher source. For that steady light which leads to the knowledge of man, we must look above man; for a true insight into his frame and constitution, we must first look abroad into that of nature: reason must ascend to the regions of philosophic

truth, and search among the known and immutable laws of the universe for some surer clue to guide her steps through the human labyrinth.

Philosophy, as with vigorous eye she explores the wonders that surround her, is, at the first glance, struck with the bold characters of Omnipotence that arrest her attention; and the longer she gazes, the brighter appear the evidences of Divine Wisdom: these it is not needful to dwell upon; they are topics on which all are eloquent, and are not denied even by those who are ready to question the equal prevalence and extent of the Divine bounty; but it is this last which, to dependent beings, is the grand point, involving their interests, their hopes, and their happiness; it therefore behoves every being, gifted with reason, to solve all doubts on this head, and not to rest satisfied with any thing short of a clear and unquestionable evidence.

To the sickly and distempered in mind or body, discontent finds ready access, and tinges every object with its own gloom; but to him who possesses "a sound mind in a sound body," the face of nature presents an extended picture of benevolence, and every sense becomes the avenue to an innocent delight. In the blue expanse of heaven, with its splendid phenomena; in the wide and fathomless world of waters; in the bright verdure of fragrant and blooming nature, gilded by the fresh glow of the morning, or crowned with the splendours of the setting sun; the character of ineffable goodness is legibly inscribed: every form of grandeur, every scene and object that has power to charm, bears the impress of beneficence and power, conspiring, with silent eloquence, to proclaim their all-bounteous Author; while, from the animate creation, countless voices of joy and gratitude arise in ceaseless harmony.

Among the animating features of goodness and intelligence which every where fill up the majestic outline of Omnipotence, none is more conspicuous or more delightful to contemplate, than the admirable order which pervades the entire system of nature, taking in its minutest parts, and producing perfect

harmony even from seeming confusion. Order implies the exclusion of evil, which is, in effect, its proper end and meaning, and constitutes the true measure of its estimation; and as it constitutes the supreme law of nature, supplies at once the most complete and satisfactory evidence of the Divine benevolence, and of its universality in operation and design. The general harmony is, indeed, maintained by the agency of diverse and even discordant principles, continually operating to the same end, though in diversified modes; and order is the invariable result.

The earth, and all that it contains, is subject to the great law of mutation, which is perpetually urging a revolution in every visible object. Matter, in every form, all creatures, whether animate or inanimate, have within them the active seeds of change; the principle is uniformly powerful, but subject to an apparent reaction, and, consequently, to a change in its form of operation: it is first progressive, leading every creature to the perfection of which it is capable; and then, secretly but inevitably, working its decay. How far the great laws of progression and mutation bear upon man, and how they may be available for his improvement, are questions of rational interest; nor can it be deemed an idle speculation so far to follow their operation, as to determine their physical and moral influence on the human constitution. In going to the fixed and immutable laws of nature, we rise to the highest and purest sources of truth; whence are derived those sure principles, which are not only the soundest in theory, but the safest for general application.

From the constant vicissitude that reigns around him, man claims no exemption; nor could the universal harmony be maintained without the operation of causes always consistent and uniform. The material part of man forming but a link (how distinguished soever) in the animal economy, he must of necessity be physically subject to the same laws as the inferior creatures: his intellectual superiority confers no pre-eminence

in this respect but what is strictly conditional; it may, and ought to be, made the means of greater good, but is more commonly the means of greater evil. If man were perfect in knowledge, and in the practice of wisdom, great indeed would be his advantages; for even the laws of nature, though irreversible in themselves, are controllable in their operation; and though man, in the great essentials, is subject to nature, yet, in matters of expediency, nature is made subservient to man.

Man, though endowed with the Godlike attribute of reason, finds his true superiority, not in the mere possession, but in the right use of it; as, by its abuse, he is subject to a much greater share of evil than any other creature; unless he avail himself of the wisdom and foresight it inspires, he can neither avert any evil, nor secure any good, but becomes the prey of his own folly, error, and intemperance; hence also the agitation of irregular passion and mental excitement, by which he is rendered obnoxious to many and serious inconveniences, from which the inferior creatures are exempted.

The superiority of man being manifestly seated in his mind, to that alone can the progressive principle beneficially apply, by connecting it with his rational powers, leading them in a perpetual advance from strength to greater strength. The faculties of the brute are comprised within a narrow sphere, and the swifter they advance, the sooner they retrograde. The human soul, knowing no period, and having no definite bound, the farther and swifter she flies, the greater is the knowledge and strength she gains, while her evergrowing energies keep pace with her progress. In matter, this principle revolves; in the inferior creatures, animate and inanimate, it effects a revolution, rising to a certain point, and then descending; in these it forms, as it were, a circle; but in man it is an ascending line of infinite extent.

The farther reason carries her research, the stronger and more urgent appear the motives for imparting the needful stimulus to the mind, and nurturing the youthful intellect

betimes. In youth, the intelligent principle works with vigour and activity, and the habits and virtues then grafted on it attain to a consistent strength, leading progressively to mental and moral excellence; but if this season pass unimproved, and the first generous ardours of the youthful mind be permitted to subside for want of proper and congenial exercise, the attempt to renew the alacrity of its powers may be ineffectual; nor, perhaps, among the countless arguments for education, is there one of any weight but which expressly points to, or implies, its timely adoption.

The perpetual approach of created intelligences towards the great standard of perfection, opens to the human soul a field of sublime contemplation. In this principle of endless improvement, we recognize that all-inspiring energy which the Omnipotent Creator has diffused throughout his works—the vital and essential power that sustains the whole: nor can human language pretend to do adequate justice to a theme so exalted. In this lower world, we see a wondrous and all-affecting agency, which, from inert and sluggish matter, has called into being a system of order, beauty, and variety, such as no finite being can sufficiently admire or appreciate; the structure of the meanest visible object transcending the most cultivated understanding. Well may we, then, ask, where is the stretch of created intellect that can rise to any credible estimate of the working and effects of this Divine agency in the invisible and eternal world, which is the appointed home of the rational spirit, and on the bliss and intelligence of those superior natures, who inhabit the celestial mansions?

The fiat of Omnipotence, "Increase and multiply," applies, doubtless, to the invisible, no less than to the visible creation; equally to the intellectual, as to the material world. The Divine Bounty had, with the same word, pronounced that *all* his works were good; in either case, therefore, to make an exception, would be a gross impiety; and if so, the powers of the human mind are destined to progress perpetually. All

nature obeys the irreversible decree; the incessant growth of vegetation, the successive generations of men, and the ceaseless progression of all things, bear witness to the truth, while they attest the power of the Divine word. By direct analogy, it is inferred, that the progress of the human soul, both in its powers and acquisitions, is by the same law so fixed and determined, that any attempt to impede the operations of the mind by physical force or restraint, must be not only vain and inefficient, but will have the contrary effect by causing a reaction, and thereby accelerating the mental activity.

We may imagine, for instance, a thinking being deprived of sight and of speech, loaded with chains, and immured in a solitary dungeon; but will the mind be fettered, or its perceptions darkened? So far from suspending or deadening the mental vigour, this would be to kindle and quicken its ardours by the most powerful stimulus: abstracted from intercourse with objects of sense, and thrown back upon her innate resources, all the energies of the soul would be aroused. The effect, it is true, would vary in different minds. The captive may pine and die, and weak spirits are broken by violence; but in such cases the mental conflict has been too great, the suffering has been an over-match for the fortitude, the effect has been produced by over-excitement, not by the absence of it. That the mind, at such a season, should remain dormant, is hard to conceive; but it is quite natural to suppose that it would be wound up to the highest pitch of excitement. History supplies abundant examples of heroic minds, conscious of worth, and indignant at their wrongs, who have yet been superior to the malice of their persecutors, and have gloried in their self-possession amid their severest trials.

The endurance of privation and physical restraint, while it exercises, proportionably strengthens the powers of the mind; and hence the perfection of the passive virtues, which are no otherwise attainable; hence, to gain credit for their panegyrics, writers, who have endowed their heroes with mental qualities

of a higher order, have been constrained to lead them through a previous course of privation and needful probationary discipline. As we cannot set bounds to the aspirations and operations of the mind, so, in many cases, we can neither keep pace with nor compute its progress. Often when its collective energies have been directed to one chosen object, not only has it outstripped all calculation, but even excited the highest admiration, by its almost superhuman flights in some favourite science, or by exploring those intellectual regions which were previously unknown.

An illustrious and all-sufficient proof of what this progressive agency can effect, will never be wanting while the annals of literature are graced by the names of a Newton and a Bacon, in whom this principle was so powerfully developed, and which, aided by a strong and persevering genius, enabled them to scale the towering heights of science, which were inaccessible to ordinary minds; while, in the vigorous and determined pursuit of their exalted object, they successfully grappled with every difficulty that obstructed their progress, and finally succeeded in solving the most abstruse and sublime mysteries of nature.

On the boundless sea of metaphysical discussion, the author of these pages has no desire to embark; "philosophical theories" he deems little worth but as they bear on "matter of fact." Amid the troubled waters of speculative controversy, he would not venture his bark, nor willingly encounter the rough waves of that fathomless abyss, where the farther we launch, the more fearful are the storms to be weathered; he would merely cruise near the shore, far from its hidden rocks, its quicksands, and its breakers, which to many a gallant first-rate has proved fatal. The application of the preceding theory is obvious: applied to the fresh and lively energies of the youthful mind, it yields the fairest ground of hope, and strongest pledge of a successful progress in every acquirement to which its powers are steadily directed; hence the mental and moral strength of character,

and hence that proficiency in science, which is the fruit of persevering study.

This principle applies, not only to knowledge, but to virtue also; with this distinction, that there being no inseparable union between them, so there is no necessary correspondence either in their progress or duration. With respect to knowledge, the mind must, in one sense, necessarily progress; for the result of all experience is knowledge in some kind or degree. Advances in virtue may be more rapid, but are less certain in possession. Acquisitions in science must be gradual, but are more permanent; for the mind cannot, at will, recede in its acquired ideas. Virtue is perpetually deviating to the right or the left, and in some weak minds may progress and retrograde alternately, *ad infinitum:* sometimes she soars and gains upon the mind with a kind of electric volition; whereas knowledge, on every advance, has a fresh eminence to climb.

The result of all goes to prove the importance of giving betimes a right bias to the mind; for commonly it is by repeated and painful effort alone that the mind attains to a moral strength of character. Nor must it be forgotten that vice is also progressive, offering an easy and alluring descent, wherein the youthful mind, under the influence of captivating passions, is urged from stage to stage in a fearfully accelerated ratio.

There is nothing to which the human soul can aspire, nothing that the bounty of Heaven has in reserve for it, but what Education may be instrumental in promoting and securing; we need therefore be under no apprehension of overrating its importance; the danger lies wholly on the other side. The present advantages of a good education, though evidently great, are the least conferred by it; its remote and lasting benefits cannot be fully known till the veil of time be withdrawn; but a sound judgment, aided by reason and experience, are all-sufficient to prove its efficacy for all the rational purposes of human existence.

Education finds man helpless and ignorant, mentally blind,

and intellectually poor; she imparts to him the light of knowledge and truth, and the strength of wisdom and virtue. On the darkness of error, and the natural chaos of moral confusion, she commands the light of truth to arise, and causes order and consistency to appear: all things conspire to prove its importance, and to proclaim its necessity and universal obligation. The prince who is moved by sound policy, and a regard for the welfare of his people, is bound to promote it; the patriot must surrender his title and character if he refuse to promote it; the philosopher, from conviction of its expediency; the philanthropist, from motives of humanity; the parent and the guardian, from natural affection, and a sense of duty, will combine to promote it; the merchant and the trader know too well the worth of probity not to promote it; and, finally, all who favour the cause of virtue and true religion, will not fail to promote it; and every one who does effectually promote it, deserves well of his country, and is not the least among the benefactors of the human race.

On the main question, the advocates of Education are agreed; all would adopt the best system, but what that system is, yet remains to be defined, being now, as heretofore, a matter of endless opinion and dispute; and were it possible to hit upon a plan so perfect as to exclude all error, and secure every advantage, it would not content all, because, in their notions of what constitutes error, or produces benefit, men widely differ; hence most establishments are distinguished by some peculiarity, and every innovation finds its partizans. Amid such various pretensions and merits, where can a standard be fixed, or to which shall the palm be assigned? It is evident that no rational estimate of modern Education can be formed, without taking these diversified plans as parts of a general system; a fair inference can be drawn only from the combined effects of the whole, and without such a collective view, no determinate judgment can be formed.

Public schools lie more open to scrutiny, and less diversity

obtains among them than in such as are conducted after private plans. Among these, many, doubtless, are admirably regulated for every desirable purpose, whose aim and tendency is to make good men as well as apt scholars; to cultivate the heart not less than the head, and thus render knowledge subservient to social happiness. But it must be owned there are establishments, neither few nor unfashionable, whose celebrity rests on science alone, and whose chief claim to popularity consists in a facility of rendering youth expert in the obsolete languages, often to the great prejudice of health, as well as the exclusion of things of much greater utility and importance; but candour forbids partial deductions, and bids the unprejudiced inquirer direct his observation rather to the general results of Education, as manifested in the youthful manners of the day.

As we have no fixed criterion to judge by, reason must supply its place, by comparing the qualities we admire and approve, with the youthful character as we find it: we must look, then, to the conduct and habits of youth just entering on the busy world, whose term of Education being completed, we reasonably expect to find in them those endowments and qualities of heart and mind, which are the surest passport to honour and happiness. In their internal character, no less than in their external deportment, we look for a pleasing proof of the efficacy of that course of discipline under which they have been formed, and for those fair lineaments that bear witness to the power and beauty of Christian graces, blended with and tempering the native ardours of youth: in proportion as these becoming traits are wanting, there exists an obvious cause, at least, for the suspicion of omission or neglect.

Never has there been an age so favourable to all improvement as the present, in which science seems to assert her meridian power, copiously shedding the clear light of intelligence on the sons of men. In this, her harvest-time, reason

may well rejoice, and justly anticipate the fairest fruits of Education, now also that ingenuity has been nearly exhausted to provide all the requisite means for facilitating its objects: in every department of literature, concise and able treatises abound; the diversified channels of information being cleared of their ancient obstructions, the streams of knowledge may henceforth flow in an uninterrupted course.

The complicated interests of society require that forms of Education should vary, to suit the views and avocations of individuals; hence, those branches of knowledge that are merely subservient to secular objects, will be variously estimated, according as they fall in with their designs; each will, of course, lay the greatest stress on such requisites as are most nearly connected with success and eminence in his particular calling; and as such differences of opinion relate only to minor considerations, it is but reasonable that every man should, in these respects, be at perfect liberty to judge for himself; and so long as men have the power of thinking and acting freely, and are swayed by self-interest and self-opinion, so long will these motives enter into their schemes, and shape their plans.

Education has ever a two-fold object in view; the needful knowledge it imparts is of two kinds—the one adapted to man's temporal need, the other essential to his future happiness; the one subservient only to sublunary interests, fluctuating and terminating with them; the other fixed and immutable as truth itself, which forms its proper basis. For the neglect of this primary object—the rectifying and exalting his virtue and his reason—no eminence of science, no earthly interest, can atone; but this being secured, Education becomes all things to all men, and may be varied at will to promote any private or public object.

Whether a neglected or an erroneous Education be the greater evil, must always depend on the kind of error, and the degree of neglect; but a cultivated mind, though it may be clouded

by prejudice, is, at least, more accessible to the conviction of truth than the Egyptian gloom of ignorance, which, could it admit the same light, has not the same power to use it aright. Ignorance opens the door to every specious error, entangles its victim in a labyrinth of evils, and if it accompany any virtue, it commonly betrays it: from vice it affords no protection, but is rather the signal for its assaults. A prejudice has seldom more than one foe to contend with; but ignorance can at all times number a host.

Even to the well-disciplined youth, life, at the outset, is thickest with perils, but hope sickens at the prospect it offers for the untutored. No sooner does man emerge into the world, than he is surrounded and engrossed by objects and cares that put all his powers in action, and is subject to the ceaseless importunity of restless passions, each demanding its own gratification. Interest, pleasure, and ambition, are ever pulling him in contrary directions, and in this distraction of mind the forward vices will often find a more cordial welcome than the modest and retiring virtues: without discrimination and self-command, in no common degree, he will be deceived by the mask of artifice and falsehood, and yield at length to the fatal influence of irregular desires, even should he have courage to resist their first attacks.

Though errors enter singly into the mind, they ever follow in a train, and one introduces another, till their combined power has usurped the throne of reason, and blinded the judgment. Wisdom and instruction will then be too late; all the avenues to the mind, which should have been secured, will now be closed against their approach. Amid the clamour of the conflicting passions, their call will be unheeded, and virtue, doomed to wander defenceless and bewildered among the thousand tracks of error that intersect her path, will lie prostrate at the first attack of overpowering temptation. Neglect is not, indeed, a definite error, but it is more; it is the great source whence every disorder flows, being at once the parent

of ignorance and disobedience, and of all that is base and degrading in the human character.

But, it may be asked, what power or authority can restrain the headstrong youth, who obstinately follows the bent of his irregular inclinations, in defiance of advice, admonitions, and threats? Much, it is to be hoped, may be done if he be not mad outright. Nature demands intervals of repose, and in such seasons reason will resume her dominion, and suggest better things. Nature, it is known, possesses a wondrous though secret power, whereby the noblest virtues are sometimes grafted on and supersede the rankest passions; and characteristic vigour, when turned from its wild and lawless course, works oft with an efficacy unknown to innocence itself.

In the calm period of reflection that must often intervene, even in the most dissipated and licentious pursuits, could the virtuous and dignified Socrates, with his persuasive eloquence, affectionately propose a few of his impressive and heart-searching interrogations, how would our thoughtless adventurer be perplexed and abashed! In the vain endeavour to exculpate himself, all the powers of thought would be aroused, and if but a spark of reason remained, would rekindle the slumbering embers of virtue: from self-conviction he could not possibly escape; the enchantment would at least be broken, and he must either attempt a reformation, or wage perpetual warfare with an alarmed conscience, a contest far too unequal for nature, unless utterly abandoned and depraved.

Notwithstanding the superior information, and the many advantages that time and experience may justly be expected to bring with them, it does not appear so plainly as could be wished, that either the present, or coming times, promise an adequate increase of wisdom and happiness. Not without cause we congratulate ourselves on the pre-eminence we enjoy above our ancestors: great is our superiority in all science and literature, and in the arts of luxury and refinement; but are we equally their superiors in individual worth and sterling

virtue; or is not the falseness that mingles with our refinement rather put to rebuke by the sincerity that was blended with their simplicity?

If the manners of youth present always a faithful index to the spirit of the times, those of the present day will yield but slender occasion for boasting. What, it may be asked, are the qualities that chiefly distinguish our youth? Are they filial piety, exemplary deportment, a love of study, and an honourable thirst for knowledge? Are they actuated by the ruling desire of becoming useful members of the community; or do not their motives seem to centre, almost exclusively, in selfish interest alone, apparently making the world, with its vain circle of pleasures, the supreme idol of their hearts? A sweeping censure would be cynical and unjust; but if there be cause to suspect a preponderance of the latter qualities, the fault must surely be ascribed rather to error and mismanagement than to nature.

But neglect, though a manifest and frequent source of mischief, is by no means the only one. The evils that flow from an undue and ill-timed severity, though less common, are equally pernicious, and the misuse of discipline is often worse even than the want of it, and more difficult to remedy, by its giving birth to those alienated and bitter feelings, which are most adverse to the ends of Education. The youth who thinks he has just cause to regard the severities imposed on him in the light of oppression and injustice, cherishes a spirit of determined hostility, urging him to throw off so troublesome a yoke, and, on the first opportunity, to show his contempt and abhorrence of all arbitrary restraint, by a line of conduct diametrically opposed to it; and thus does a too rigorous discipline frustrate its own end, in addition to other serious inconveniences, that too often result from the injudicious exercise of it.

To these considerations is to be added the undeniable fact, that multitudes, of the most promising genius, have been

sacrificed, and many consigned to an early tomb by coercive methods of prematurely developing the powers of the mind, by which its rising energies are overstrained and broken; for such is the natural and too common effect of all undue mental exactions on a delicate constitution.

It is not needful to consult medical science in order to be convinced that a sound and healthful frame is as essential to mental excellence as to bodily comfort; and that a broken and dejected spirit is the constant companion of a decaying constitution. In every state of Education, the body claims its due share of attention: in infancy and extreme age, the mind seems often to be wholly dependent on it; and even in the prime of manhood, it is only when the bodily health is good, that the mind can act with ease and vigour. This subject having been treated of in the preceding essay, it is here merely touched upon, from a conviction of the folly and danger of affecting an indifference for all such things as are not in themselves purely intellectual. Errors of this class clearly arise from ignorance of the physical structure of man, and of the close and mysterious union of matter and mind in his constitution; for how spiritual and intellectual soever we would persuade ourselves or others that we are, the flattering theory is ill supported, or rather is manifestly discountenanced, by our daily experience.

Severity being in some degree an evil, can be eligible only as the means of counteracting a greater evil, such as a confirmed refractoriness; in such cases it is available as an ultimate remedy, when other and milder expedients are hopeless; but though no argument can recommend it as an approved means, or necessary for improvement, it still finds advocates in some of our grammar-schools, and similar establishments. The great number of pupils in some of these is a plea for coercive measures as being the most summary and decided; but corporal punishments are now justly on the decline, and harsh methods are fast yielding to more rational and effectual means. To some, who can look back for half a century, the remembrance may

still be fresh, of the repulsive features then more common in Education than at present; when the now exploded system of austerity was enforced with the rigour of monkish discipline; and deplorable was the condition of the youth whose generous nature was subject to a system so slavish and ignorant; whatever might have been the fate of his head, his heart was little consulted, and the best feelings of his nature were consequently alienated in disgust.

Many a worthy man has looked back with indignation on the hateful system of mental drudgery by which his youth was oppressed; not an imaginary ordeal, but a positive purgatory, in which the memory was surcharged with indigestible materials, the spirits exhausted by continued exertion, and the mind kept on a perpetual stretch, rendered more painful by the dread of the impending penalty that awaited a failure. The most enterprising spirit is unequal to such discouragements, but to the delicate mind they are overwhelming, and may be fatal; and even should such means occasionally succeed, it would be incurring a certain evil in pursuit of a precarious good: peace of mind is sacrificed, innocent pleasure excluded, the temper probably soured, and health impaired by an ill-judged course of unmerited suffering; but nature will always revolt at so unequal a struggle, and, sooner or later, a reaction will be the certain consequence.

Severity is also as absurd as it is unnatural, when employed for the attainment of things of secondary import; but how greatly is the absurdity and cruelty increased, if, in reality, there is no occasion for it, and if it fail to effect what kindness might readily have accomplished! Nature, always consistent with herself, has made ample and wise provision for the growth and culture of every excellence, by the quick sense of honour and shame, the strong desire of praise, and the rooted aversion to disgrace, implanted in every breast: on these every virtue may be engrafted; by them every fault may be supplanted; even the love of pleasure, which all admit to be universal,

supplies more effectual stimulants to exertion, and better correctives of indolence, than all the powers of force and threatening combined.

In favour of kindly motives, it is also to be remembered, that in the effects they produce, the mind is always a willing agent and an interested party; and they who have to do with youth, must know, and ought to consider, that what is not willingly done, is rarely, if ever, well done; whereas, by making the desire of praise and reward the motive, not only is improvement promoted, but a cheerful temper also, which is connected with many solid advantages, preserving the proper tone of the mind, and conducing to bodily health; which are main ingredients in Education, as well as in happiness.

On a lively sense of honour and shame, every desirable habit may be formed and perfected; whereas compulsion can effect but little, and nothing well, because it runs counter to the will: actions never ripen into habit by a forced repetition; inclination must be gained over, without which all reformation is insincere and imperfect. A youth may be constrained to study eight or ten hours a day, and for any length of time; he may thus become accustomed to it; but give him his liberty, and it will quickly appear whether it possess the strength of a habit or not: if it has not been a voluntary effort on his part, his habits will immediately assume a different form, and side with inclination, running to the extreme, perhaps, in a course diametrically opposed to their former current.

From such considerations it would appear, that systems of discipline, founded in error, may be productive of consequences scarcely less injurious than such as arise from positive neglect; and hence we gather an additional proof of the necessity of a right judgment in matters connected with Education, in order to discern and obviate the difficulties that beset it; but skill and patience can work miracles, and possess the secret of rendering even the meanest passions in some way subservient to the great end of improvement.

Among the diversified plans of modern Education, their very general failure leads to a suspicion that the systems and the pupils were not very well matched. One grand defect appears to be, that in many (otherwise excellent) plans, boys seem to have been considered as beings purely rational and intellectual, whereas the proper business of Education is to make them such; and it is more than probable that the most ingenious theories, how faultless soever in themselves, will ultimately avail nothing, unless framed with immediate reference to the true and natural genius of youth. Some, it is true, are studious and obedient, but many are the reverse; and it is the office of wisdom, in working a cure, to adapt, as well as to apply, the remedy to the disease.

But, it may be asked, are not boys rational beings? That many are imperfectly so, may be admitted; but the majority can advance but a slender claim to this high character, till experience and discipline have taught them to reflect. The few who are by nature of thoughtful and retired habits, form exceptions, and may, with comparative safety, be left to themselves: Education has chiefly to do with the indolent, the sportive, the refractory, and the heedless: these are to be won, convinced, and reformed; and either the system must be adapted to these youthful needs and defects, or youth must be prepared for the system (an absurdity even in idea), or there will be no permanent agreement between them. The error of many projectors is, perhaps, a too great refinement, which will not stoop to that simplicity, which would have formed, probably, the best feature in most of the systems where it has been omitted.

Frequent are the complaints of the ignorance of youth, especially of such as have completed their education; and to the parent it is a serious grievance, though, to a certain extent, attributable often to themselves. Protracted vacations may be assigned as one cause of the deficiency; it is certainly no extravagant arithmetic to affirm, that most boys will forget in

six weeks what they have been three months in acquiring, and if it be so with the diligent, much more with the idle.

The early suppression of curiosity (often in the nursery) is among the leading causes of ignorance, whereby the spirit of inquiry is damped, which is nature's first signal for information; opening and preparing the mind for the reception of those intellectual treasures, which from time to time are to be stored up in the memory. The right use of reason is a sovereign and indispensable good, and a right use of the means is essential to its acquisition; but to repress childish curiosity is to dry up the springs and sources of knowledge at the outset, and a weak and defective judgment is the natural consequence.

Voluntary acquirements are, doubtless, more lasting than such as are the result of forced exertion; but the chief cause of ignorance is often seated in the character of youth, in that natural indolence and aversion to studious habits, which it is so difficult wholly to eradicate. To effect this, emulation must be roused, and an interest excited: the susceptibilities of youth are wakeful; ignorance and indolence are quickly put to shame and rebuke by the praises bestowed on merit and intelligence; nothing will more effectually put negligence to the blush, than a well-timed comparison, or well-managed satire, which has power often to kindle a spirit of resolution in the most indifferent. Wounded pride becomes a powerful auxiliary, and will often stir the mind to a course of honourable exertion; whereas the adoption of harsh measures, as a remedy, often increases the evil, and has been known to occasion an incurable apathy and disgust towards all subsequent means of improvement.

In extreme cases of obstinacy, dissimulation, or of any gross breach of morality, corporal punishment may be advisable, as the most summary and effectual; but in all that pertains to intellectual culture, reason is not only the most proper, but the most powerful corrective; and he who has not ability to make it thus available, must be deficient in skill or temper—

both essential qualifications of a teacher. The higher British authorities, including Locke, are unanimous in support of rational and gentle measures; and, among foreigners, Fenelon and Montaigne may be noticed, whose writings are celebrated throughout the lettered world. The latter has left it upon record, that he was educated without any mixture of severity; a signal proof of the efficacy of lenient methods. One thing is evident, that these superior geniuses never had their spirits broken, nor their tempers soured; but severity might have done both, and so have deprived mankind of the noble legacies they bequeathed to the world.

To assert that, in England, due attention is not given to Education, would be a groundless and unmerited aspersion on the truly enlightened and christian spirit of the age. It may be that in some, nay, in many instances, perhaps, much valuable time is absorbed by things of little worth, to the exclusion of others of primary importance; such objections, however, apply but partially, and chiefly affect the wealthier and middling classes. If, in the education of their own children, the rich are occasionally chargeable with tolerating, in some degree, either error or abuse, they at least possess the redeeming virtue of excluding it with care from all the systems they have planned for the benefit of their inferiors: this is especially the case in the religious instruction of the children of the poor. As it respects this important branch of juvenile tuition, they may be said to have dealt better with their dependents than with themselves; for it is generally observable that, in schools of the humblest description, the greatest stress is laid on the knowledge and practical duties of Christianity.

The wonderful increase of charitable establishments of every description, and for the purposes of Education in particular, may well challenge the admiration of the enlightened foreigner; and should the rapid growth of such institutions be, in some cases, attributable to a spirit of emulation among differing sects of Christians, rather than to the pure and unmixed motive

of charity, yet of all rivalry it is the most beneficent and the most happy in its effects. Ambition, flowing in so honourable a channel, assumes the character of heavenly wisdom, and becomes powerfully instrumental towards the perfecting of the virtue and happiness of the human race.

The wise and liberal provision for rightly educating the poor, now forms a proud national feature, reflecting the highest credit on its promoters; and though the origin of these schools may often be traced to other and better than worldly motives, yet the most sagacious policy could never have laid a surer foundation for national prosperity. Many being of a recent date, their social operation cannot yet be fully appreciated; but time and continued support will, doubtless, manifest their beneficial tendency, and realize the hopes of their philanthropic friends.

In every nation, but more especially in a great commercial state, the labouring classes necessarily comprise a considerable part of the entire population; and it is of vital importance to the great trading interests, that these be trained to habits of industry, temperance, and fidelity. They compose the wheels and springs of the constitutional machinery, and if they be out of order, all must go wrong. To these humble but sterling qualities the greatest empires have owed their rise: with public virtue they grew and flourished, and with popular corruption they again sank to their pristine insignificance. There is, perhaps, no medium of public Education less open to objections than the parochial charity schools; nor does their simplicity constitute their least perfection; nothing is taught but what is deemed indispensable; and one valuable feature which they have in common, viz. schools where the children are lodged and boarded, is the exclusion of evil from outward contamination—a negative merit, perhaps, but combined with more solid advantages than many a prouder system can confer. But this is their least praise; religion is properly taught and attended to, forming a prominent part of the daily routine, and is thus made the solid and consistent basis on which the

whole social and moral superstructure is raised. As these plans include only such acquirements as are decidedly useful, and they being but few, the attention is not so divided but that they may be thoroughly attained, which is rarely the case when the mind is at once engaged in many pursuits.

Another obvious benefit to society, from the adoption of such establishments, is the suppression of numerous day-schools of the lowest description, where, for a trifling weekly pittance, the children of the poor were crowded together, in a scene, often, of continued noise and confusion. Economy, or rather necessity, being the parents' motive, they were not entitled to expect much either from the master or the pupils; and as small gains must be averaged by increased numbers, hence may be inferred the anarchy likely to prevail among so mixed and numerous an assemblage of undisciplined boys. The preceptor's policy in such trying circumstances would naturally be to get rid of his daily annoyance on as easy terms as the nature of his engagements would permit.

The injurious operation of such a system needs no comment; it is evident that such receptacles for unruly children must ever tend to increase, instead of counteracting, the evils which abound in crowded and indigent neighbourhoods. Happily these disorders are fast receding before the spirit of Christian philanthropy which now pervades the empire; the wants of the needy are every where anticipated by the bounty of the rich; and the solid advantages of Education are now proffered nearly to all, without money and without price.

It would argue no small defect of judgment, to suppose that the good resulting from such benevolent exertions will be reaped exclusively by the poor. All who patronize, will be indirectly and ultimately gainers; and should not its salutary effects, in full measure, be witnessed by its present promoters, they have the true satisfaction of knowing that, ultimately, their posterity and the nation at large will not fail to participate in the happy fruits of the seeds thus wisely sown.

The working portion of this great empire (not merely in a commercial view, but effectually and in the strictest sense) is a vast and influential body, whose interests are closely interwoven with the national honour and welfare. The whole political superstructure rests on the labouring millions; in them are centered the main roots of national prosperity and national power; the adoption, therefore, of means essentially conducive to their moral and intellectual improvement, while it strengthens industry, and adds intelligence to individual utility, collectively enhances the dignity of the public character; hence also the national prospects will necessarily expand and brighten with the spread of intelligence and moral worth among the operative classes.

Well-conducted establishments are now every where to be met with, whose professed object is the advancement of true piety; these all owe their rise and support to that spirit of Christian benevolence, so honourably characteristic of the times. Public gratitude is also due to the promoters of Sunday-schools, whereby a reproachful gap in Christian morals has been eligibly filled. The habitual profanation of the sabbath, a prolific root of crime, and which had grown into one of the worst features of juvenile delinquency, has thus been laudably arrested, and may eventually, it is to be hoped, wholly be excluded from this most favoured land. The Christian sabbath is thus made, happily, instrumental towards the high and benevolent design of its primitive appointment. The respectful observance of the day, with the orderly deportment of the children in these schools, merit the warmest encouragements; the beginnings of licentiousness are thus checked, and its overflowings prevented; while to the children of want and labour are secured that innocence and integrity, which constitute their best portion and sole earthly inheritance.

The formation of schools for infant tuition, presents a recent feature in our public Education; and the rapidity with which this new system has grown into popular favour, renders it an

object of increasing interest and importance. As the adoption of infant-schools is now becoming general, they will probably, at no very remote period, form a national feature of considerable magnitude; it therefore becomes the imperative duty of all who are active and influential in forwarding them, to ascertain not only their positive merits, as grounded on present expediency, but also the probable consequences that may result to society from their future operation, supposing them to be generally adopted: this, it is evident, should be done with a view to obviate the unforeseen inconveniences that might otherwise creep in by degrees, and gather strength with their growth. The wisest plan in such cases, if there be the least room for doubt, is to meet and invite, rather than to shun, objections; to investigate, rather than reject, whatever may, with seeming reason, be urged against them. By thus submitting their merits to the severest test, the surest foundation is laid for their permanent success.

The strongest current of popular favour constitutes no sufficient and unerring authority for the guidance of individual judgment. If, indeed, sudden and extensive patronage were an infallible sign of true desert, these schools would claim an unlimited support; but as it cannot be denied that this general plan for infant education (how excellent soever) introduces a social innovation of no small magnitude, it ought, doubtless, to be well scrutinized in all its points and bearings; and its best advocate is he who timely discovers any abuses to which it may be liable, in order that they may be the more effectually excluded. In all questions nearly affecting the public weal, or involving its future interests, a hearty concurrence should be preceded by the most perfect conviction attainable.

There seems, also, to be a greater need for caution in cases where a direct appeal is made to the heart; because benevolence is apt to take the lead of judgment, and thus reason is often thrown off her guard. The manifest design of infant-schools is so highly creditable to humanity, that there is ground

to suspect that the kind and laudable intention may operate in many minds as a veil upon the understanding, and elicit a cordial support, independent of the consideration of their real merits and tendency. In addition to the ingenious and plausible theories employed by the advocates of the new system for infantile tuition, the warmth of parental feeling is elicited in behalf of the most helpless and interesting portion of the community: it presents itself to the mind as the cause of pure humanity, and the appeal is irresistible, from the sympathy it naturally excites. But amiable and laudable as this may be upon individual occasions, yet in matters of general import, forming a public precedent, and involving, it may be, serious considerations, it is at least prudent to deliberate ere we determine.

From the sentiments laid down in the preceding essay, touching the error and danger of subjecting the infant mind to undue restraint and application, it might be inferred that the author's opinions are at variance with a system whose primary object apparently is the culture of the human intellect from its very dawn. Should his reasonings on this interesting topic have suggested objections that are applicable to any part of the plan, yet be it remembered, that all general theories are liable to partial exceptions, and that necessity may justify a departure from an approved rule, when the object is to secure a greater good. But even such an objection does not aptly apply here;—these schools owe not their origin, singly, to a conviction of the expediency of cultivating the infant mind, or as a means of raising the human intellect to higher degrees of perfection; but rather, and with better reason, were designed as a timely check to a serious and wide-spreading mischief. A manifest evil existed, and to a great extent; to root out this social grievance, and plant liberally, in its place, the seeds of future good to society at large, was the praiseworthy motive; and should the success be answerable to the merits of the design, its friends can have nothing to fear.

Whether these schools are fully adapted to remedy the evil complained of, remains to be proved; but there can be no doubt of their beneficial tendency in all populous and manufacturing districts; in many parts of the metropolis, and other great cities; and, in short, in all crowded and indigent neighbourhoods, where their manifest utility entitles them to the warmest support. In all cases wherein the time and attention of the parent is necessarily engrossed by their daily occupation; to all who are constrained to absent themselves from their homes and families at stated periods, and perhaps for the entire day, it offers a protecting asylum, where their children find proper tendance and instruction, who otherwise might be left to pine amid the ill consequences of neglect. Thus are they rescued from a train of evils, and fitted to become a blessing to their friends and to society: these most pleasing results may be justly anticipated from the steady operation of a system in which intelligence and humanity are thus happily combined.

Great, however, as are the general benefits which infant-schools seem to indicate, they may, in particular instances, lie open to objections never contemplated by their first promoters, who could discern nought but what is laudable in a system that promises so fair. Such may, perhaps, deem it rather cynical than wise to harbour a suspicion of error, or anticipate abuse, where appearances are so prepossessing. The facts, however, of every day, force upon our notice such painful proofs of human frailty, as to render vigilance and caution indispensable in all plans of a social and general bearing, and doubly so in whatever bears the stamp of novelty or innovation; for, unhappily, so it falls out, that wherever there is the means, there seems commonly to be the will also to pervert even the best and most praiseworthy intentions. This perverse spirit is known to prevail among the lower orders to such a degree, as in a measure to counteract the designs of their truest benefactors; and hence the necessity of proceeding on the surest

ground, and of guarding every avenue against abuse and encroachment.

The real merits of every new system must be decided by experiment, rather than by theory; its operation should, therefore, be limited till its good effects be well defined. Whatever degree of estimation may be attached to infant-schools, it must be regulated, chiefly, by three considerations, involving their consequences to society, to the children, and to the parents. All the advantage the public may expect to derive, must be by means of the benefits conferred on the children and their parents, and will be in proportion to the amelioration of so large a class of the community. It is evident also that, the children being wholly dependent on the will of the parents, the success of the plan will, in a great measure, rest with them, depending on the manner in which they may choose to avail themselves of the advantages thus freely proffered. Could they readily be induced to take a right view of their best interests, so as cordially to co-operate with their benefactors, the system could hardly fail to work well.

As the success of these establishments will greatly depend on their management, it is obvious that none should be intrusted with this charge, unless duly qualified; discretion and ability must combine to give weight to their endeavours, and enable them to improve opportunities for making a favourable impression on the minds of the parents, with whom they will have a principal part to sustain. In order to produce this desirable effect, it is necessary that they should acquit themselves respectably. Were other motives wanting, curiosity would naturally lead the parents to see and converse with those who have the care of their children; to them they must apply on all ordinary occasions, and consult on every emergency: from this intercourse will necessarily result a favourable or unfavourable impression; and a good or evil report will be the certain consequence.

A disposition to canvass the merits of new and popular pretensions, is a well-known characteristic of the subordinate classes; it is therefore the soundest policy to conciliate opposition, and secure the good opinion of all: this may best be effected by the selection of persons of suitable intelligence and experience to superintend these schools, who, by keeping a watchful eye over their interests, might be enabled to check the beginnings of abuse. Good sense and good nature are not more needful to win the affections of the children, than discrimination and firmness to give weight to their authority with the parents. Were the least infringement of the rules tolerated, they would soon be violated with impunity, and a corrupt precedent would be held out for the imitation of others. Much attention and perseverance may at first be requisite to bring parents and children into due training and regularity; but such vigilance at the outset will produce the happiest results, and obviate much after inconvenience. To insure a ready circumspection on the part of the master or mistress, they should not be burdened with a too numerous and extensive charge, whose pressing and immediate duties would not leave sufficient leisure to detect encroachments, which, if not timely prevented, would creep in and multiply apace.

Few objections can be urged to the mode in which the children are actually occupied in these establishments; varied amusement and exercise are happily blended with familiar and colloquial instruction—a system infinitely better fitted to nourish the infant mind, than any possible plan of formal restriction. The absurdity of professing, as some have done, to "make little children clever," would form the worst part of the system, no less prejudicial than ridiculous, requiring the imposition of such ill-timed restraint, as could not fail to beget an insuperable distaste towards all subsequent discipline. In the training of young children, it is manifestly unwise to enforce any plan of instruction that might have a tendency to sadden the temper, and undermine the health, by checking the animal

growth and spirits at that tender age. The school-rooms, also, should be spacious, well aired, and not crowded; none should be admitted at too early an age, neither should any be expelled without some show of form and ceremony for example's sake.

What has been here advanced in favour of infant-schools, applies exclusively to those neighbourhoods where there is an absolute call for them, and where, under Divine Providence, they may prove an incalculable blessing to the industrious poor; for, notwithstanding all that has been urged on the subject, I should forbear to recommend their universal adoption, till time has shown more of their fruits. The test of experience can alone solve those doubts which the author has shared in common with others who have exercised their thoughts on this subject. Safely may they be recommended on the score of local utility; but to advocate their unlimited establishment, as an approved medium for the education of all classes of children indiscriminately, is quite another thing, involving many interesting considerations.

But, it may be asked, what is the mischief to be apprehended, supposing that infant-schools were erected in every parish in the empire, and that the middling and wealthier classes should universally adopt them for the incipient stage of education, as the most eligible medium for moulding the infant mind, setting aside the considerations of wealth, station, &c., as secondary motives? We have, as yet, hardly sufficient experience of its results to warrant so fixed an estimate of its collective merits, as to apply them to so novel and complex a scale, which cannot be fully and fairly done till the experiment has been tried on such a plan as may solve every conjecture as to the wisdom and good policy of allowing it to spread without any assigned limit. The question is fairly before the public, and its merits or demerits will, in the event, most effectually plead for or against its further extension; and it is surely wiser and safer to proceed gradually, than to urge it forward on so wide a plan, while its ulterior tendency remains questionable. The doubts

which reflection suggests are commonly based on reason, and it has been often found, that human wisdom, by ingeniously seeking to refine upon natural and established usages, has incurred the danger of running to extremes, and thereby leading its votaries to encounter errors, that to their visionary philosophy had not been revealed.

It is evident that a perfect approval of infant-schools, on the ground of local utility, may very well consist with strong doubts as to the good policy of adopting them universally. It may be advisable thus to dispose even of all the children of the poor indiscriminately; but there are serious objections against their extension to those classes of society which are not constrained by any necessity to adopt the plan. Such a proposal would, no doubt, find advocates; some might be led to countenance it in compliance with the prevailing spirit of the time, and others might lend it a partial support upon trust, which would be as quickly withdrawn on the failure of its promised efficacy. The stronger the current of popular favour, the greater is the danger of a reaction, where promise and performance keep unequal pace, and where high and plausible pretensions are not followed by their corresponding fruits.

But supposing this infant system to be thus generally adopted, it is at least questionable whether its ulterior operation might not be injurious; whether its tendency might not be gradually to weaken the authority of the parent and the obedience of the child, by prematurely drawing a line of separation between them; whether it might not loosen the bond of reciprocal affection, and so endanger the most holy and beautiful of social ties, at least in the infant breast; whether it might not render the poor less provident, or the rich less mindful of the parental charge; whether such an uniform system of training might not induce, in some degree, a sameness and insipidity of character, tending ultimately to impair those individualities and characteristic distinctions, which are,

perhaps, essential to social order;—are questions that at least furnish matter for consideration; and it is more than probable that, in particular cases, some such results would follow.

But the strongest objections, perhaps, that can be urged on this head, are such as are grounded on the nature and efficacy of maternal influence. To enlarge on this point, would be to enumerate all that has been advanced on this subject in the preceding essay, to which it may suffice to refer the reader, who is actuated by a desire of entering more closely into the merits of this part of the question.

In the most approved plans for infant tuition, simplicity very properly forms the leading feature, and is, perhaps, the most meritorious part of the system. In whatever relates to the training of the infant mind, every departure from simplicity is a manifest defect; when, therefore, certain advocates for infantile education speak of infallible modes of teaching children to reflect ere they can give distinct utterance to their thoughts, both reason and nature incline us to question the wisdom and efficacy of the attempt: supposing it were even practicable, it is very doubtful whether it would be advisable; and those who profess to do such wonders with infants, are far more likely to injure than to benefit them. Such means may, in forward minds, produce a precocious and brittle wit, but this is directly opposed to a solid and rational one. A superficial cunning might thus be superinduced on the mind, which with an ignorant few, perhaps, might pass for superior intelligence; but the discerning mind would reject the absurdity, suspecting, with good reason, that the right digestion of such knowledge far exceeded any powers of the infant mind.

It is more than probable that a child imbibes nobler ideas and more lasting impressions from its own free observation, than from any artificial guidance. Reason bids us follow nature closely, but forbids us to force her in the first operations of the mind. Nothing great or grand was ever yet a forced

and hasty production; all that is most estimable in nature, is of slow and steady growth. The child of the peasant, reared in simplicity and solitude, who at the age of seven or eight years probably knows not its letters, is by many deemed an object of commiseration; but it may be questionable whether the advantage be not on his side, although compared with the town-bred child, who at the same age has, perhaps, made considerable progress in elementary science; not that a rustic simplicity is in itself desirable, but because we not uncommonly find it accompanied with a freer and bolder turn of thought, with faculties fresh and lively, and that constitutional stamen, which gives the fairest promise of a vigorous, though slowly maturing, intellect. A sound and healthful bodily frame is, of all things, most desirable in a child, and as needful to its virtue as to its happiness. The hardy plant of the soil can better brave the storm than the flowering-shrub of the hot-house; and being the unforced production of nature, will continue to flourish, while the other is endangered by every exposure, if not doomed to a speedy decay.

Having endeavoured briefly, but impartially, to discuss the merits of this interesting question in its various bearings, the result manifestly leads to this conclusion, that infant-schools, judiciously regulated and confined to their proper sphere of operation (viz. all manufacturing, crowded, and indigent districts), are calculated to become eminently useful, by counteracting a great social evil, and as tending to ameliorate the character and condition of the great body of the people. Having also plainly stated the reasons which, apparently, form a just ground of objection to the general adoption of such a system for all classes of children, it may be further observed, that should some of these apprehensions be groundless, others doubtless are founded in truth, and many considerations, perhaps, remain behind, that have hitherto evaded inquiry. More reasons might, perhaps, have been urged, but of this we

may rest assured, that time will disclose all that is needful, and place their merits and demerits in the proper point of view.

Let, then, the patrons of infant-schools carefully watch their progress, guided in their judgment rather by the plain evidence of utility than by that fleeting popularity, which is oftener elicited by novelty than proportioned to true desert: while conducted in the spirit of Christian charity, keeping in view their social bearing, the advancement of rational piety, and the great design of the beneficent Redeemer, who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me." Under the influence of such motives, they cannot fail to promote, in a humble degree, the glory of the great Creator, and the best interests of a portion of his intelligent creatures; tending thus to lighten the common burden of human frailty and suffering, and to augment the general stock of happiness, their friends and supporters may confidently anticipate the Divine concurrence, on which the efficacy and success of all human institutions mainly depend, and without which created wisdom is impotent, and its designs unavailing.

ESSAY IV.

ON THE PREVALENT LEVITY OF YOUTH—ITS MISCHIEVOUS TENDENCY—AN INQUIRY INTO ITS CAUSES, AND THE MEANS OF COUNTERACTING IT—CONTAINING STRICTURES ON THE PROGRESS OF LUXURY—ON ANCIENT LITERATURE, AND THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN TENDENCY OF LAYING AN UNDUE STRESS UPON IT IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES, &c.—ON THE DANGERS CONSEQUENT TO YOUTH, FROM AN UNRESTRAINED LIBERTY, DURING THE INTERVAL BETWEEN THE COMPLETION OF EDUCATION, AND THE ENTERING ON PROFESSIONAL AVOCATIONS, &c.—SUPERIOR EFFICACY OF RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE.

THAT times of national prosperity are ever most favourable to the progress of science, literature, and the liberal arts, is the plain dictate of reason, and fully confirmed by experience. It is when courted and encouraged by the smiles of opulence, the invitations of leisure, and the animating prospect of honour, that the human intellect shines forth with renewed lustre and energy, displaying the vastness of its powers by the grandeur of its conceptions and designs, and the dignity of its nature by its lofty aspirations—still looking on to perfection as its ultimate object, while ardently pressing forward in its bright and honourable career. But how gratifying soever such indications of man's divine original, and the ever-growing faculties of his mind may prove to the philanthropist, yet, to the natural pride of the human heart, it must always be a humiliating reflection, that the dearly-prized arts of refinement and luxury, those social fruits so seemingly fair and flourishing, so congenial to civilized life, so palatable to sense, and so flattering to worldly

vanity and ambition, should invariably bring with them the active seeds of moral degeneracy and national decay.

To dwell upon the unwelcome evidences of the weakness and folly of human nature, when thrown off its guard by protracted success and enjoyment, is needless; the humbling truth is sufficiently attested in the annals of every empire, and in the records of every age; and is fully corroborated by an intimate knowledge of the human heart, and of its manifold inherent corruptions. Many of these may lie apparently dormant in seasons of adversity, but are invariably active in times of high prosperity; which, by the experienced of all ages, have been considered as most dangerous to the virtue of man, gradually, but fatally, undermining that moral excellence in which his true superiority is centered.

History is replete with instructive lectures on the fate of nations. She teaches us, that as the patriotic and self-denying virtues are the sure precursors of national honour and exaltation, so are popular levity and licentiousness the too certain indications of public humiliation and approaching ruin. She points out, in legible characters, the transitory nature of all sublunary glory, and the instability of all that centres in worldly wisdom: we here trace the natural and easy gradations by which the mightiest states traversed the wide extremes from a virtuous simplicity to a total degeneracy; the hardy and frugal virtues are seen leading to power; wealth becomes tributary, and luxury is introduced; to intemperance profligacy is allied, and vice, in every form, at length becomes familiar; even the arts then turn mercenary, serving but to render more palatable the poisoned bowl of sensual pleasure.

Salutary and striking as are the admonitions of experience, yet such is the common infatuation of mankind, that past warnings become powerless when opposed to the present current of popular contagion, augmented by prevailing passions and prejudices, and swelled by a thousand streams of luxury, all flowing from superfluous wealth as from their fountain-head;

and while it continues to pour forth the tempting abundance, so long will the passions quaff the intoxicating draught, and run to proportionate extremes of riot and excess.

But it may be objected, that if such were the inevitable consequence of bestowing on man the power of self-gratification, all reasoning on the question would lead to this brief conclusion, that, in order to effect the desired change in man, we must either deprive him of the means of luxury, or wholly change his nature, by annihilating his sensual appetites and desires. The observation is well founded, and by admitting it in its full force, the arguments in favour of a timely check will derive the ablest support; for, granting the defect to be rooted in nature, yet it is by habitual indulgence alone that it attains to a fixed and fatal ascendancy. The wound that at first is easy of cure, is rendered desperate by long neglect; and in like manner the diseases of the mind, which become obstinate and incurable by delay, may doubtless, in almost every case, be arrested in the incipient stages by the influence of moral culture and religious truth, which are most effectual when earliest applied.

As much as the diseases of a moral nature exceed in comparison such as are merely physical, by so much weightier is the obligation to employ a timely remedy; but, to justify the hope of success in this instance, the attempt must be seconded by strenuous and well-timed exertions; for wherever luxury has the ascendancy, the best education will hardly avail to repel its influence on the heart and manners of the young. Though a youth should be formed as a model of virtue, and trained to the relish of whatever is fair and good; yet, on emerging into the world, he must, to a certain extent, comply with the reigning modes. A change commences, and gradually gains ground, till at length the metamorphosis, in most cases, becomes complete; nor can it be reasonably expected that the single and pliant virtue of youth should long be able to withstand the combined influence of the refinements and elegancies of life,

ministered to by all the blandishments of art, and countenanced by universal example.

To the man whose matured judgment can trace the connection between consequences and their causes, in the chain of human events, there will appear but little room for surprise at the modern indications of youthful levity: rather, weighing the natural susceptibility of that heedless age, and the power of those objects that act upon the imagination, such effects will seem to him but as the native, though wild growth of a luxuriant and unweeded soil. Whatever be the cause, the effect is manifest; in every direction levity meets the view, and under a thousand diversified forms—some apparently harmless, but all bearing a latent poison; while amongst its more reckless votaries, such as are "worn and hackneyed in the ways of men," even its thin disguise is thrown off, and it stands confessed in its most appalling form, often setting at defiance, with heartless impunity, the laws of God and man.

This is, indeed, its worst stage, but appears to be the ultimate destination of the greater portion of those who heedlessly enter on this broad path of error: many are the ways, and easy of access, that lead to it, and all-inviting to the sanguine temperament of youth. Idle time and idle company are the Scylla and Charybdis, by which the fragile bark of youthful virtue is threatened: to steer safely between them, exceeds the pilotage of inexperience; and, without superior discretion at the helm, that which escapes the rock, will speedily sink in the whirlpool.

Amid the dangers and temptations of surrounding dissipation, sanguine youth is commonly content with no better guide than its own blind presumption, though a known betrayer, and the most deadly foe to its virtues and its hopes—a moral upas, whose poison is the more surely destructive, as being least suspected. Among the chief springs of juvenile folly, not a few may often be traced to parental weakness; many take a manifest though mistaken pride in that precocity of sentiment, and affected manliness of deportment, which the young are

but too prone to assume; nor is it surprising that, when thus encouraged by the visible sanction of the parent, the liberty so imprudently given, should, at that thoughtless age, be pushed to an absurd and ridiculous, if not to a culpable, extreme.

There is abundant reason to suspect that we are attempting a too forward game with the rising generation. Can it be deemed wise thus to make them men in mind, while they are yet children in stature? In the present forward state of society it is, perhaps, not easy to conceive a more prolific root of degeneracy; and even were it not so, no advantage, surely, could result from thus inverting the order of nature. Our ancestors of some centuries back were as brave and virtuous, and perhaps as wise, for the ordinary purposes of life, as the present or coming generation are likely to prove, with all their advantages; but they, in their youth, were wisely kept in the back-ground, and thus the passions were not brought into operation till they verged upon manhood; so that judgment acquired solidity ere virtue was exposed to the attacks and impressions of vice. They, indeed, were men robust of limb, and of corresponding mental vigour; but there is assuredly greater need of caution in training youth at a time when luxury and sensuality have so industriously multiplied temptations, and gilded every object of desire. Good cause have we to beware, lest, while divesting youth of their simplicity, we deprive them of innocence, and, in lieu of sterling worth, endow them with the base, though current, coin of dissimulation and corruption, and lest the knowledge we give them degenerate to cunning, by thus sapping the foundation of wisdom, and bringing the passions into play long before the proper time.

But, exclaims the anxious parent, are our children really beset by these manifold dangers? Is it, indeed, true that they are thus environed by a host of seductions, and their virtue exposed to perpetual assaults? Apparently it is, and the more so as we ascend in fashionable life; and the question naturally follows, By what means does parental wisdom endeavour to

counteract an evil of such extent and malignity? Possibly the advocate for youthful liberty may contend that such a measure of precaution is superfluous; that society is well-ordered, and the world goes on as it was designed; consequently, that such ideal representations should be regarded as the over-wrought colouring of a cynical imagination, and an exaggerated picture; but let him who professes to think thus, steadily contemplate the scenes and occurrences that are hourly passing in review on the busy stage of life, and then let unprejudiced truth decide.

With more reason it may be urged, that youthful liberty is the natural parent of levity and lawless pleasure; and that sensuality is the arch-betrayer of virtue and manly excellence, and the common grave of early merit. But is she not, in our times, enthroned in state; and do not all ranks bow in homage at her shrine? Have not the arts combined to array her in attractions not her own? Is she not officiously decked with all the counterfeit comeliness of virtue; and is not man the willing captive of her borrowed fascinations, too often surrendering the empire of reason to her base usurpation, almost without a struggle? And if manhood be thus over-matched, how shall inexperienced youth prevail in a trial so disproportioned to its powers?

Youth naturally look up to their seniors for light and example; but how often is man the seducer instead of the guardian of innocence, by openly enlisting under the banners of luxury, the common enemy of his virtue and religion, and strengthening her power against himself by so dishonourable an alliance! In every age vice has slain her thousands, but thus reinforced, she numbers her ten thousands among the daily victims of sensuality. When vice is common, and luxuries have become necessaries, avarice assumes an universal sway; all are then the vassals of wealth; even the muses become venal, and worship the golden image which the foe of God and man has set up; while general corruption, like a flood, bears away all in its current.

Where, in such modish times, shall unassuming worth find favour and acceptance? Where, among the sons of folly and fashion, shall modest virtue, attired in the plain garb of diffidence and simplicity, find a welcome or a home? The noble-minded youth, who boldly maintains a strict adherence to truth and virtue, will find a solitude in the fashionable crowd, and stand alone in the brilliant circle, the jest of youthful levity, the sneer of envy and malice, and the butt and scorn of pride and infidelity: all the malignant passions will be leagued against him as their common enemy; and he who perseveringly guards the post of honour, resolutely proof against their united assaults, must possess more than Spartan fortitude, more than human virtue.

Moral courage of so high a grade is indeed a rare quality—a heroism of the first order; but where is it to be found? The high motives of religion can alone inspire it; the well-taught Christian only can furnish the bright example; the fixed purpose of such a mind only can rise superior to the terrors of the world: his armour is of heavenly proof; and the powers of darkness are in vain arrayed against him. What parent would not glory in a son of such a stamp, and thus nobly endowed! Yet how slender is the provision commonly made to secure an object so truly desirable! how sparingly is the sublime spirit of Christianity infused into the minds of youth! Even seriousness and humility, those old-fashioned but sterling qualities, are almost obsolete, or at least rarely enforced in these times of competition and ostentatious display, although it is evident that such a frame of mind is the proper and only soil in which true religion can take root. But, lest the author should be suspected of a design to weary his reader by a protracted strain of invective, savouring rather of zeal than of knowledge, he begs to adduce the testimony of a late eminent theologian and philosopher on this subject; and a more respectable authority than Paley it would perhaps be difficult to cite.

The writings of this celebrated author of "The Evidences

of Christianity," are peculiarly distinguished for strength of argument and reasoning. In the many excursive flights of his vigorous intellect, few glaring inconsistencies were likely to escape his comment; his shrewd penetration could not fail to mark and animadvert upon the defective state of Education in certain essential points. The following quotation is from a sermon on religious seriousness; and as it fully coincides with the view here taken of the subject, the author deems he cannot better advocate his cause than by transcribing the passage literally.

The doctor proceeds thus:—" The general course of education is much against religious seriousness; even without those who conduct it, forming or intending any such effect. Many of us are brought up with this world set before us, and nothing else. Whatever promotes this world's prosperity, is praised; whatever hurts, obstructs, and prejudices, this world's prosperity, is blamed. Mankind are every where seen in motion and action, but they are all directed to earthly objects; and the same of conversation. The views that are continually placed before their eyes, regard this life alone, and its interests. Can it then be wondered at that an early worldly-mindedness is bred in the heart, so strong, as to exclude heavenly-mindedness entirely? In the contest that is always carrying on between this world and the next, it is easy to perceive which has the advantage; and thus it is that the world pre-occupies the mind, and gets the first hold and possession. Childhood and youth, left to themselves, are necessarily guided by sense; and sense is all on the side of this world. Meditation brings us to look towards a future life, but then meditation comes afterwards; it only comes when the mind is filled and engaged, nay, crowded and surcharged with worldly ideas. It is not only, therefore, fair and right, but it is absolutely necessary, to give to religion all the advantage we can, by dint of education; for all that can be done will not suffice to set religion upon an equality with its rival, the world." Such were the sentiments of this able

divine. The censure is just, without severity; delivered in plain and familiar terms to his country congregation; but it is probable that his language would have been more strongly pointed, had he been addressing a fashionable audience; for luxury, it seems, was little known at Bishop-Wearmouth.

If the doctor be right (and to prove that his sentiments are wrong would probably be neither an easy nor a wise attempt), in how strong a light do they place human inconsistency! for never was there an age so pre-eminently distinguished as the present for all the ostensible fruits of Christian faith. A spirit of universal and unrivalled benevolence seems to have anticipated the various claims of indigence and human suffering in every possible form: the superabundance of wealth seems to be divided, as it were, by contract between the opposite demands of charity and sensuality; but, for the spiritual wants of the young, sparing and precarious still is the provision, notwithstanding the praiseworthy efforts of Christian philanthropy. A modern writer thus expresses himself with some truth, but with, perhaps, too great severity:—"There is," says he, "a carelessness, an apathy, in most of the upper classes, which is scarcely short of marvellous. When do they take a direct or indirect mode (the latter is perhaps the better) of bringing before their sons' minds the beauty of kindness and generosity; the advantages, in every sense, personal, social, and eternal, of virtue? When do they ever strive to form the juster, the nobler, the kinder feelings, into principles?" A censure so sweeping, it is to be hoped, is unmerited, as, doubtless, it admits of many honourable exceptions, though its application may hold good to an extent by no means limited.

Were youth taught habitually to think and reflect on what falls within their observation, nature would do much towards forming their better affections into fixed principles of conduct; which few teachers will be at the pains of doing, but which, assuredly, must well repay the labour, as the mind would then possess within itself a voluntary repellant to every extreme of

folly and absurdity. Some parents may suppose that, while secluded from the world nine months out of the twelve, their children are, at all events, secured from a continued series of hurtful impressions; but, granting that the mind, while engaged in a course of studies, is comparatively dead to that worldly excitement, which might endanger their virtue and hinder their improvement, yet, in order to gain a fair and complete view of the case, it will be needful to push the inquiry somewhat further. Every school forms within itself a little commonwealth, where the busy and the idle, the studious and the loquacious, are promiscuously blended; where credulity and duplicity, in their various incipient forms, are incessantly active; and where all want prudence, because none possess experience: from such a medley of the passions, what inconsistencies must arise, but for the timely control of a skilful master-hand! There is also to be taken into the account the constant ingress of new comers, each, doubtless, bringing a quota freshly imported from the gay and busy world, to allay the thirst of juvenile curiosity; and thus it is that folly contrives to furnish a feast, even within the precincts of a school.

But, granting that no great mischief ensues, or even that all goes on well during the months allotted to study; the vacation meanwhile approaches, and with what feelings of exultation it is hailed, we need not enquire. The young are thrifty managers when time is their own, and pleasure is in the scent; they soon contrive to strike a balance with the world, and so make up for what they deem lost time; with avidity they identify themselves with every cheerful companion, and familiarize themselves with every society that apparently proffers delight; ever restless in quest of novelty, roaming from scene to scene, and still planning for the morrow, they make ample amends to themselves for the temporary suspension of their favourite pleasures; and fail not to reap (if not wisely restrained) an abundant harvest of vanity. On returning to school, each has a fund of anecdote and adventure to recount, which is thrown

into the common stock, and serves as food for the craving imagination, till the happy season returns, when the same round of frivolity is repeated, and levity, increasing levity, is the spontaneous result.

The judicious parent, aware of all this, wisely counteracts these beginnings of mischief, by assigning to every day its duties, as well as its needful recreation; much is thus in the parent's power, and good cause is there for its prudent exercise. In the adoption of such precautionary measures, there is a two-fold wisdom: the youth whose holidays are a mere blank waste of indolence, will probably lose in one month what he has been three in acquiring: whereas by a mixture of study, not only is improvement insured, but a higher zest is added to enjoyment, which then only is truly relished as a seasonable refreshment, and imparts a tone and vigour to renewed exertion, by no other means attainable. The external pomp and glitter attendant on public amusements, easily captivates the heart and betrays the judgment, which in youth is commonly as weak, as prejudice, arising from imposition on the senses, is strong: this is the real point of danger, and is always augmented by an unguarded and premature access to the flattering scenes of worldly gaiety. On this vulnerable side of youthful virtue, it therefore behoves parental care to concentrate all its force, ere an irreparable breach shall have been effected.

If the great design of Christianity be to wean us from the things of this world, and if its transient vanities are, to youthful optics, magnified into realities, it is equally the duty of the parent and the teacher to correct betimes so fatal a delusion, by rectifying the false standard of estimation, or, rather, by substituting in its place a sound practical discrimination: either this must be gradually done, or the gracious intention of Heaven will be gradually subverted. The youthful heart is hourly open to new impressions, and is, unhappily, most susceptible of such as are most fallacious; it behoves us, therefore, to get the start of the world, and make the better impression first.

Impressions may be made in three ways—by appealing to the heart, to the senses, or to the understanding: the last is evidently the most difficult; for it is easier to win the heart than to convince the reason; and to captivate the senses is the work of a minute. It is manifest that, in point of influence, the world has every way greatly the advantage, by means of its sudden and vivid impressions; while to operate effectually on the understanding, is often a slow and difficult work. All the powers of Education, precept, and example, combined, are not a match for the fascinations of sense, unless the heart be first won, and so made a party in its own cause: the best and only means of rendering the victory complete, is by thus early engaging all the youthful energies on the right side.

The youthful mind continually needs a stimulus, and should always have a direct object in view; to select that object, and to engage them earnestly, as well as to guide them aright in pursuit of it, is the parent's privilege, wisdom, and duty. It is an ancient maxim, that when the arch-enemy of man finds him idle, he sets him at work; the same may truly be affirmed of youth and the world. To the youthful heart there are a thousand avenues; the world commands them all; and if one be left unguarded, it is ready to enter and take possession. Against this formidable adversary, it behoves all who have the guardianship of youth, especially in these times of peril to their virtue and happiness, to "up and be doing," and timely seize the vantage-ground; for the beginnings of levity and irreligion, as Solomon affirms of the beginnings of strife, resemble the breaking forth of water, which, if not timely stopped, becomes an overwhelming flood, whose course is marked by spreading ruin and devastation.

Though the term classical applies with equal propriety to authors of every tongue and nation, provided their merits entitle them to the distinction of being placed in the foremost rank of literature; yet, by the too partial sanction of custom, the word has by many been almost exclusively applied to the

ancient Greek and Roman writers, whose languages have been termed "the learned," by way of pre-eminence; whereas many a truly classic British author comes in but for a secondary degree of estimation. The words ancient and classical, as applied to literature, have thus become nearly synonymous; with many parents, at least, this is the case in reference to Education; hence nearly every establishment for youth assumes the title of classical, and founds its claim to it on these ancient languages, which now almost invariably take the lead in schools of all degrees. The effect of this undue partiality, or prejudice rather, is so remarkable and so general, that however perfect a system of Education may be, how well soever adapted to enrich the mind with wisdom and science, and to ennoble it with truth and virtue, yet if it include not also the dead languages, it must not assume the title of classical; though to youth of the middling classes, at least, these, as it will appear, more frequently prove a hinderance than an advantage. As errors, however, of all kinds, and of the longest standing, are now happily receding before the fast-progressing power of intelligence, and as the strongest interest is awakened in the public breast on every thing connected with Education, there is sufficient ground, at least for the hope, that whatever is essentially erroneous will be gradually rectified.

The energetic spirit of inquiry is abroad every where, freely disseminating the seeds of truth, and rendering the human mind superior even to the power of long-cherished prejudices: merit is appreciated wherever it is found; and whether it be the produce of a heathen or a christian soil, is, doubtless, equally worthy of its honour and reward. But why should Englishmen be so fond to fill the high places of literature with the names and works of aliens and foreigners, to the exclusion of many of their equally talented countrymen, who are suffered to remain undistinguished in the crowd? Among those who possess the requisite information, there are, perhaps, few so partial as to deny that, for every Greek or Roman writer of

deserved celebrity, some dozen or score (and in some cases, perhaps, the plural of these numerals might be used) of equal merit might be produced, and all the genuine fruit of British genius.

It is but justice to admit that, among the ancients, some have well earned, by the wisdom and virtue that shine in their pages, all the praises that posterity could bestow; but so great has been the veneration paid to the memories of this chosen few, that there is reason to suspect that some of their less worthy cotemporaries have been viewed through a partial medium for their sakes; for much the same reason that we treat all the members of a family with kindness for the sake of the parents, whom we know and esteem. As familiarity of intercourse is supposed to beget often a similarity of sentiment (among philosophers particularly), it is perhaps taken for granted, that men who enjoyed fellowship with those master-spirits, must have imbibed somewhat of a like elevation of soul and grandeur of sentiment, with the like felicity of expression, imparting to their writings the reflection, at least, of that intellectual superiority, whose brightness must have been fresh in their minds; hence, out of respect for a few who are deservedly admired, some degree of estimation has been extended even to such as would seem to deserve the censure rather than the applause of posterity, were their merits and moral tendency impartially weighed.

That these oracles of pagan wit and refinement should, in the darker ages of ignorance, have been looked up to as the sole standards of taste and erudition, cannot raise our wonder; but that they should retain an equal ascendancy in the most enlightened and christian times, ministers food for some interesting and serious speculation.

This ruling taste for heathen wisdom and philosophy can alone be assigned as the cause of that unreasonable stress which for so many ages has been laid on the acquisition of these idolized languages; which, should it prove to be an error,

is, and has been, one of no common magnitude, by the great waste of time and talent in the (often imperfect, and consequently useless) attainment of them. To withhold from these ancient tongues their due meed of consideration, would be absurd and vain; nor will they want advocates while wit and learning are in vogue; neither will he who stands forth as a champion for the prior claims of native genius, want opponents. His plebeian taste and presumption in raising his standard against such a patrician array of talent, might furnish an all-sufficient theme for animadversion, and a most formidable literary phalanx he would probably have to encounter.

All will allow that Latin and Greek are good in their place, and rank deservedly high in the republic of letters; but in the education of youth—of British and Christian youth—it is the dictate of common prudence to assign to them their stated bounds; and better were it, doubtless, had it always been said to such monopolists of time, as to the sea of old, "Hitherto, but no further shalt thou come." If the ancient mounds of separation, fixed by nature's law, were broken up, the encroaching element would, instead of fertilizing, again deluge the plains; and in a moral sense the analogy will, perhaps, hold true between christianity and heathenism; for they often breathe not the same spirit, but it is obvious to which we, as Christians, ought decidedly to give the ascendancy.

The high-born and affluent, it may be said, are at liberty to choose their own studies; but even with those who have time wholly at command, it seems unreasonable that the obsolete tongues should take precedence of all other acquirements, how needful and important soever, either as respects the present or a future existence. Did the life of man comprise two or three centuries, instead of three or fourscore brief years, the sacrifice of time might not signify much for the acquisition of languages spoken two thousand years ago; but, when we consider the short and uncertain date of man's life, and seriously contemplate his future destiny, how great will appear the sacrifice of his

freshest years and youthful bloom for such an object! Will poring over a page of Greek inspire his frame with vigour to rival the athletic Spartan? or did the Athenian sages thus lay the foundation of their national power? Are the subtilties of heathen fables so superior to the simple majesty of truth? or is the morality of Horace, or Ovid, as well adapted to improve the heart and morals of youth, as the inspired oracles, the emanations of Eternal Wisdom?

When learning was in its infancy, ere the invention of printing, or before the appearance of those excellent translations which now abound, the inquiring student had a sufficient plea for mastering the original tongues, it being then the only medium of access to the stores they contain, and of deciding questions relative to ancient and disputed authorities: but no such necessity now exists, that youth should be made to toil and drudge for what, in some cases, has proved worse than useless, to the at least partial exclusion of the truly valuable branches of education. Such remarks, however, do not pointedly apply to the universities, nor to those professions wherein a knowledge of these tongues is deemed indispensable. It is in the abuse, and not in the discreet use, of ancient literature, that the danger lies. No reasonable man would object to Latin and Greek for their own sakes; but when they become the vehicle of mischief, and give birth to crying evils, such abuse becomes the subject of just animadversion.

"Non vitæ sed scholæ discimus," said Seneca; and the sentiment has been echoed by the wise and thinking in almost every age. Montaigne and others have reprobated the continental system; and the venerable Locke repeatedly gives vent to his disgust in strong and pointed terms, at the absurdity of all ranks agreeing to educate their children in the dead languages. To these authorities might be added some of the leading names in the list of British worthies, who have expressed themselves to the same effect; but the ridicule and the censure attach chiefly to those who can neither give their children

fortunes, nor hardly allow them a sufficient time for the full attainment of the more useful and indispensable branches of education; and yet, because it is the reigning mode, will have them absurdly trifle away their time with grammars and graduses, collecting words rather than information, and perplexing their wits without increasing their knowledge. Even in some schools of higher pretensions, where the pupils attain to a moderate proficiency in ancient lore, how often does there appear to be an undue omission of things essential, for the sake of studies which promise little advantage, and certainly ensure none that can be deemed equivalent to the cost! If Homer must be read, we have Pope's masterly translation; or Virgil, we have it in the finished language of Dryden; and greatly superior in each, it is presumed, to the most laboured conception of the youthful student, even after many years of drudgery and toilsome research amid tomes, grammars, and lexicons.

It has been the opinion of some, that, of the ancient authors, not a few have gained, rather than lost, by the skilful hands through which they have passed. Pope was no bare translator; his rich, inventive genius, embellished whatever he took in hand; to the beauties of his author, he added his own strength and colouring; and even Homer has cause, perhaps, to be much obliged to our bard for the stately dress in which he is now arrayed, though it be of British manufacture. Obscurity, say the critics, and with reason, is a source of the sublime, and doubtless the ancients have reaped the full benefit of it. That sentiments, couched in a language and idiom long obsolete, should be perfectly clear in literal English, is not always to be expected; the superior sense of a passage, therefore, not being quite apparent, it is supposed to comprise some hidden beauty, some unveiled mystery; so that what, in reality, may have been a defect, comes to be lauded, perhaps, as an uncommon stretch of thought. It is not meant to detract from the known merit of works that have stood the test of ages; but the lapse of time is rather a magnifying medium, than a perspective that is true

to nature. At all events, wherever we find the semblance of error, or even a cause of doubt, in any wise connected with the all-important concern of Education, it is the province of reason to scrutinize and rectify it, aided by a thorough knowledge of the human character, which experience tells us is, in its essentials, the same in every age.

If, by the inordinate stress laid on the ancient tongues in modern education, it is designed to evince the prevalence of a correct taste, and show that we duly appreciate the spirit and genius of the ancient lords of our hemisphere, it is by no means equally apparent that we emulate their domestic policy. By our mode of training youth, it would seem that we have quite a different way of thinking on the subject of Education. Though they were in immediate intercourse with many nations, with them the maternal language was all in all; nor can there exist a doubt in any thinking mind, that the cultivation of the mother tongue is to Englishmen, if properly weighed, both in a public and private view, an object of the very first importance, and closely connected with eminence and success in secular, no less than in philosophical and intellectual pursuits. Such has been the improvement of our language, by the ability and industry of successive master minds in philological science, that in copiousness and richness it is now surpassed perhaps by none, whether ancient or modern; and so abundant, within the last century, have been the contributions, and so progressive the labours, of native genius, as to raise it to that distinguished pre-eminence in the republic of literature, which bears as flattering a testimony to British talent, as it does to the powers of the human intellect, affording a most gratifying proof of what it can effect when its energies are guided by skill, and seconded by perseverance.

Great Britain has no less reason to be proud of her sons, than had ancient Greece or Rome: she can produce examples equally ardent and aspiring after whatever is great and good, as are to be found in the annals of those ambitious common-

wealths. In noble deeds they are unrivalled; in the fine arts unsurpassed; in the best qualities of heart and mind, perhaps unequalled: with generous emulation have they successfully contended for the prize of fame in every path that leads to honour; evincing the genuineness of patriotism by the universal diffusion of knowledge, and the true quality of their philanthropy, by the zealous dissemination of truth. In our own excellent language we possess all that is needful to instruct and delight; all that science has heaped together during a long course of ages; all that religion can require; all that can edify the mind in its search after truth.

In our maternal tongue we have, as it were, an intellectual and well-stocked garden, in which neither cost nor labour has been spared to render it worthy of our reception, and within whose ample bound we may range at will amid all that is admirable or estimable, which is here collected and arranged in the most perfect order. In this mental paradise, far surpassing the sensual, we find whatever is pleasing to the mind's eye, or good for intellectual food: here, in addition to our own native fruits and flowers, we number the choicest productions of every foreign soil; but all that is of home growth, combined with all that is hither transplanted, is, it seems, judged insufficient for the nurture of British youth, or deemed too plebeian to be fashionable.

Why do we allow our youth to pluck so sparingly the nourishing fruits of native genius, that are ever soliciting acceptance, and need but to be gathered in order to be enjoyed? We bid them explore other intellectual regions; we make them toil in strange paths, oft amid thorny and wearisome tracks, where they must ascend many a steep and rugged height, in quest of that wisdom and knowledge which is ever at hand, and with ease procured at home. Rarely is wisdom found by heedless youth in the wild and trackless, though often beautiful, mazes of heathenism, where, probably, the forbidden fruit is the first they seize, and where what is evil is oft most

prized, because most grateful to the sense. After long travel and fatigue among those heights of difficult approach, they may perhaps discover the proud domes and fanes of heathen deities, the erring, though dazzling, haunts of human wisdom and philosophy blending good with evil, and the towering Babels of pagan pride; but for the brighter vision of truth, they must take a more heavenly wisdom for their guide, and follow the humble but peaceful path of Christian virtue.

If the right formation of the youthful mind and character be indeed the grand object of all education, it is, doubtless, attainable singly by that wisdom, which consists in pursuing the best ends by the best means; but by the circuitous and beaten route of many a modish system, the pupil, it may be presumed, but rarely arrives at so desirable a point, or if he does, it must be by an indirect and painful progress, seemingly little connected with the end in view. There ought to be some very good and sufficient reason for dragging a youth through a cheerless and almost endless maze of grammatical intricacies and perplexing technicalities, in order to introduce him into an heterogeneous medley of wisdom and absurdity in authors, where occasional fine thoughts are mixed up with the pollutions of false morals, dark prejudices, and gross idolatry, and where the brutish, and even fiendish, passions are often speciously and pompously tricked out, and held up as fit subjects for honour and applause. Whether such be deservedly the chosen and approved means of forming the heart and morals, directing the views, and of rectifying the judgment, of Christian youth in the nineteenth century, the witness in every thinking man's breast may best determine.

To the more zealous among the admirers of the ancients, such sentiments may seem to be somewhat cynical and sweeping; but having already done justice to the honourable exceptions, which are deservedly esteemed by all who can appreciate genuine merit, the remainder, if viewed collectively and impartially, will appear to be, at least, comparatively insignificant,

both on the score of merit and of morals, and so greatly inferior in wisdom and purity to the sublime doctrines of Christianity, as to justify the most pointed language, when the subject under consideration is Education; for whose all-important ends the pure and dignified morality of the gospel, with its animating motives, is as superior to the cold and formal theories of ancient philosophy, as the sacred Person from whom it emanated excelled the ancient discordant sectarians in consistency, sound wisdom, and practical purity.

A chosen few, indeed, among the ancient sages, seem to have been raised up by Heaven in times of prevailing degeneracy, as if to show mankind to what a degree of excellence human nature could attain by the force of its native energies, when directed to a noble end; and, it may be added, that such examples form, by contrast, a tacit reproof to many in later times, who, with infinitely greater advantages, are yet far behind them in available wisdom, and in the practice of the social duties. But while it is true, on the one hand, that from the hives of ancient Greece and Rome a variety of intellectual sweets may be extracted, yet how often, alas! are they mixed with an alloy of strong, though latent, poison! The ardent temperament of youth is but too susceptible of the moral infection, and, unhappily, the youthful passions are too readily kindled into an unhallowed and consuming flame by their too specious fascinations: such is not the manna that Heaven has provided for the nurture of Christian souls, for the growth of Christian virtue; for this, if we seek at all, we must go to a better source than mere human wisdom could ever attain.

The loss of time and misapplication of talent, though often great, and even irreparable, is not the sole cause of regret, or the only loss sustained, by an over-devotion in youth to the study of the profane authors: false notions of honour, of virtue, and of wisdom, are often indelibly impressed on the mind, while the pure light of truth is darkened and mystified. In the moral and mental field of Christianity the wheat is alone pure

and unmixed; but in those heathen pastures, the tares of infidelity commonly find a soil but too congenial to their growth. And wherefore, it may be asked by the plain Englishman who loves his country, and is jealous for the honour of his religion—why must Britain yield the palm of honour to Rome; and wherefore should she be so fond to proclaim the superiority of her pagan, though noble, rival, by thus seeming to deify her philosophy, and making her wisdom the oracle and standard of Education? whereas its assumed or affected dignity is as far surpassed by the majestic simplicity of true religion, as man is superior to the lower animals, or as the angelic nature surpasses the human.

Why, it may be asked, should perpetual homage be paid to a name or to a nation, because, for one bright but transient period, she spread her empire over the nations by dint of superior valour and policy, or because Divine Providence, in its mercy to the souls of men, besotted by sense, and perverted by the errors of a blind idolatry, kindled among them, from time to time, a few bright intelligences, in order to temper the moral darkness, till the Sun of Righteousness, in full splendour, should arise to chase away the clouds and darkness of heathenism for ever?

With many, the stamp of antiquity is an all-sufficient passport to favour, and whatever bears the rust of ages, carries with it the spell of a talisman; hence a specious kind of analogy gives birth to an erroneous standard of estimation, by which a weak judgment is liable to be led captive. We naturally associate the idea of wisdom with age, because many years imply long experience, and the older the man, the wiser we infer he ought to be; but by this rule the deduction will be the converse of the vulgar and abject notion, which attaches the highest degrees of wisdom, worth, and excellence, to times the remotest from our own; whereas the present are truly and manifestly the ancient times, mature in science and in every social improvement. Ours are the collective treasures of all preceding

times, the outpourings of genius of every age and nation, and to us are opened all the springs of knowledge, which to them were sealed. The farther we recede from our own times, the nearer we approach to the infant state of society, and to those rude and semi-barbarous ages, which had little, save their primitive simplicity, to recommend them. What is it, then, but an unworthy surrender of our own high privileges, a renunciation of our manifest superiority, to pay undue homage to times long past, because a few master-spirits shed a halo of light on the age and the land of their birth? or to concede that, because one gifted age or people outshone many, it must therefore outshine all, and having once attained the first rank, must continue to possess it till the end of the world?

As a nation progresses in power and refinement, its domestic and popular institutions necessarily assume a higher and more influential character; their sphere of utility gradually widening, and proportionably enhancing the public character; mutually supporting and supported; promoting while participating in the national honour and prosperity, thus blending their highest wisdom with their noblest privilege. Evidently of such a nature is the reciprocal relation and obligation that subsists between Great Britain and her popular domestic institutions, among which her public literary establishments stand foremost, as giving shape and body to the taste and genius of the nation, and a sanctioned and abiding impress to the morals and literature of the age.

Every Englishman of sense and reflection who prizes his native soil as the seat of rational freedom, to whom the land of his fathers is the home of his heart, who is zealous of its true honour, as associated with home-bred worth, will regard the British universities and public schools as objects of no secondary import, of no common interest; he will regard them as the great moral agents of the nation, active in operation, and mighty in effect, to work either social weal or woe.

Were the author of these pages privileged by superior infor-

mation, derived from extensive personal observation, to discuss the merits and details of the general system on which these establishments are conducted, he would gladly forbear the vain and needless task of recapitulating what has been so often and so ably done by those who have preceded him on this beaten track; nor would he willingly adopt the language of invective, by indulging in current terms of reprehension as to any measure of imputed error or abuse: this has been done, and overdone. Rather in the spirit of candour, taking a more liberal view, he would hail the progress of improvement, and anticipate the period when nothing truly objectionable shall remain: better to aid in ameliorating what is apparently amiss, than to kindle a needless hostility, which being in itself an evil, as a means, can be productive of little good, if good in any degree can result from recrimination and censure. What chiefly remains, or at least all that can here be attempted, must be on the broadest principle, and in a Christian spirit, by giving fearless and honest expression to such convictions as are well and rationally founded, and to such general sentiments as may be consistent with a correct view of the subject, a strict adherence to truth, and the faithful discharge of a high social duty.

A glance at the greatness of Britain will suffice to show the influential position and bearings of her domestic and literary institutions. Crowned with honour and peace, and enriched by an indulgent Providence, with all the blessings that follow in the train of national prosperity, Britain justly claims a distinguished rank among the nations of the earth, not only in her power, but in the philanthropy and energy of her public spirit, in the intelligence that sways her councils, in that indefatigable spirit of enterprise and industry, which are among her most striking characteristics, and in that bold and uncompromising rectitude in sentiment and act, which rational freedom can alone inspire, and which is so peculiarly her own—in all these she stands unrivalled; while her prowess in war, and her prudent policy in times of peace, combined with

the many and solid advantages which Englishmen inherit from the virtue and valour of their forefathers, whose patriotic exertions and generous sacrifices, co-operating with the overruling hand of heaven, have raised her to the merited pre-eminence, which is the glory and birthright of her sons.

Such are among the splendid features that mark the present great and happy state of Britain; but her truest glory is the manifest interposition of the Divine arm, that has been stretched out to shield and to crown her with favour, honouring her as the champion of Christianity, the guardian of its sacred oracles, and the chosen instrument of its bounty, investing her with the high commission to cheer the benighted heathen with the light of the everlasting gospel, by publishing the glad tidings of human redemption to the remotest regions of the earth. As the vicegerent of heaven she sits as judge among the nations; her sceptre is over the sea, her fame fills the east and the west, and the lands acknowledge her might. Where her word is, there is power; she commands, and it is done; with winged zeal the ministers of her will bear her mandates afar; her favour is refreshing to the nations as the breath of heaven; her frown, like the blackness of the rising tempest, is the herald of destruction; and, under her sure protection, the sorrowing children of oppression find refuge and consolation.

The genius of British freedom walks through the breadth of the earth, and slavery and superstition flee at her approach. Do the sable nations groan in bondage? she bids them be free; the shouting myriads cast away their chains, and the wailings of anguish and despair are converted into songs of triumph. Thus her throne is established in righteousness, and her name is repeated with blessings; her land also is covered with the monuments of her piety, and beautified with the temples of the Most High; even her soil is consecrated with the blood of her patriots and the ashes of her saints; and her past annals are filled with the names of her worthies, and the praises and deeds of her heroes.

The commanding position that Britain assumes at the present era is not a sinecure; nor is the virtue that earned it an heir-loom. The majestic ascendancy she claims as her right, cannot be sustained without a conflict, and the continued struggle of the same high principles that have cemented her power against the multiform encroachments of corruption. Her greatness is the well-earned meed of her worth, the guerdon of protracted cares, and of repeated toils. She wears no honour that she has not fairly won; and the halo of glory by which she is encircled, is the result of the favour and blessing of Heaven. Great as is her honour is the character she has at stake; equal to her majesty and power is the weight of responsibility that presses upon her. This responsibility is shared in common by the various orders of the state, and divided between her public men and public institutions; the main weight being necessarily transferred to her leading domestic establishments, as possessing a permanent and uncontrolled social and moral influence of extensive operation, and so far as they become instrumental in forming the characters of men intrusted with the reins of political power, their influence may be said to pervade, indirectly at least, the whole, their responsibility augmenting in proportion.

Among the striking proofs of her enlightened policy may be ranked the British Universities and public establishments for the protection and promotion of learning, and the encouragement of merit, especially of native growth; these much-favoured domestic institutions she has fostered and cherished through a long succession of ages, and protected in all her reverses. With the dawn of her power they had their birth; they have grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength; richly endowed, and nobly supported, enjoying the nation's unlimited confidence, they may be said to possess an influence (directly and indirectly) greater than is implied in any definite and recognized authority—an intellectual power over the human mind, superior to, and independent

of, any physical force, bounded by no localities, but extending to the hearts and understandings, wills, and convictions of all men.

To her domestic seats of learning, as her great moral agents, the nation transfers the chief weight of social obligation. Theirs is the sacred trust to form the minds and characters of the rising aspirants for power or fame, who may be shortly called forth to wield the destinies of the empire; the main social and moral springs that operate at large upon society, giving impulse to the national character, and entering deeply into its composition, are here regulated and set in motion; here the national features are moulded into form, and here the embryo character receives its early and abiding impress; here the nation deposits the elements of her future worth and wisdom, and here the seeds of her future greatness are gradually developed and matured.

These ancient and venerable seats of literature, rendered doubly interesting by their associations, are the national repositories of all that is sacred and valuable in literature. The great patrons of native worth, and of all that bears the genuine impress of merit, set apart from whatever is debasing and corrupting, exempted from the drudgery and the cares of the busy world, and from the contamination of its gaieties, inhaling a purer atmosphere, and unassailed by the passions that agitate the minds of men moving within the sphere of its seductions; the nation naturally expects that the minds of men, enjoying these advantages, should rise above the common level of excellence in rectitude of sentiment, and moral strength of character, no less than in the abstruser sciences, and the various branches of human erudition. To these chosen resorts she looks for characters of sterling worth and superior merit, and for exemplary models of true piety; and hence, with reason, she deems them admirably adapted for the purposes of Education, and for the guidance and guardianship of inexperienced

youth: she therefore patronizes them as the fittest nurseries of knowledge, rational and divine.

In glancing at the merits of human institutions, it is an easier and far more pleasing task to delineate them after the flattering model of perfection we have erected in our own minds, than with the pencil of truth to depict them as they are, with their incidental defects and homely realities about them. The first step towards perfection, doubtless, is the exclusion of evil, and the importance of this rises in proportion to the nature and worth of the interests at stake. In the great work of Education, these being of a social, moral, and religious kind, and consequently of primary importance, in every point of view, proportionably augment the necessity of securing the good, and precluding the evil, by all practicable means. It becomes, therefore, the imperative duty of all who are influentially connected with the public resorts of British genius, to banish whatever may be truly objectionable from these venerable establishments, expressly founded for the laudable purpose of training youth to all that is fair and manly in character and conduct, or excellent and valuable in acquirement.

Imperfection, in a greater or less degree, will necessarily obtain in extensive and complex systems; and the more diversified their operation, the more numerous will be the avenues for the intrusion of defect. Perfection is, in no case, the proper result of human agency, even should the subject of its operation be merely passive and obedient; much less can it be required as the result of educational systems, operating on materials always mixed and doubtful, and often contradictory, which (when wayward youth, instead of obediently co-operating with the plan, become refractory) rather resembles two opposing systems, the one so resisting and counteracting the operation of the other, as to neutralize its proper effect. Much allowance must here, in fairness, be made, as the evil that has its birth in the heart, cannot by any system be excluded: this can only

be suppressed by depriving it of the stimulating food on which its growth and existence mainly depend; but an evil bias may be counteracted by imparting a contrary bias; and the heart may be won from a pernicious pursuit, by giving it a new and better object of pursuit, and engaging the mind briskly in quest of it.

As to portray even a juvenile society without a moral taint, would be an exaggerated and flattering picture, so the design wholly to exclude what is objectionable, must prove a utopian scheme. Vice is not so easily expelled; either it is so hidden as not to be detected, or so disguised as rarely to be recognized; but since it is equally certain that it may be excluded in some degree, and that degree (as reason tells us) proportioned to the care and watchfulness of the superintending agency, we are no more free to set limits to the effect than to the cause; for, as the means of prevention, being dependent on the will of the directing power, may be more or less, that there will be a corresponding result is manifest, simply by connecting the cause with the effect.

Were unerring wisdom and indefatigable vigilance the attributes of humanity, and did they invariably preside over the interesting circle of gay and busy youth, banishing from its social arena every thing evil, and all immoral tendency, how beautiful a vision might be realized! The ardour of emulation and rivalry would be tempered by the cordial sympathies of friendship, and the spirit of envy by the glow of social feeling; every malignant impulse would be arrested and absorbed in the fraternal intercourse of love and kindness; merit and excellence could never be wanting in a youthful fraternity thus innocent and happy, exhibiting an edifying picture of human society in its incipient approaches to divine—a christian community in miniature, that philanthropy might contemplate with increasing delight.

Aptly have Oxford and Cambridge been termed the eyes of the nation; as such it behoves them to sedulously watch over

the sacred interests confided to them, and (if the analogy hold good, of the single and the evil eye) it may be added, that in proportion as the intellectual organ of vision is perfect or defective, so will moral light or darkness, social harmony or confusion, prevail. It is assuredly no common good nor common evil, either in kind or degree, that emanates from these high sources; the mischief is of a deadly nature, and the good vitally healthful, operating on the heart and influential part of the social system, and circulating to its remotest parts, as the medicine or poison, mingling with the life-blood, flows to the extremities of the body; and thus, in the moral state of society, vice or error, however modified, will, under cover of such a sanction, extend to every part, and wheresoever the evil prevails, the good must necessarily recede.

Great as Britain is, in every point of view, as the focus of intelligence, the patroness of the arts and useful inventions, and the great mart of the commercial world, little would her celebrity avail, were it not sustained by corresponding excellence in the great essentials that confer true dignity, and ennoble human nature: these also she possesses with a commanding influence in the wide empire of letters. Great as is her political sway, the intellectual power she now wields is far greater. The former has limits, the latter none. Potentates may check the progress of earthly power, and appoint the boundaries of states; but the forces of the east and west combined, may not stay the rapid advances of intellect, nor say to knowledge, "No farther shalt thou come." Having once gained a glorious ascendancy, she laughs at physical force, and goes on her way rejoicing, conquering and to conquer: her empire is over the human mind, and she bends it to her purpose. To the joint power of truth and knowledge all things must eventually yield; theirs is an evergrowing empire, and an everduring existence.

As a nation, Britain has nothing at stake more worthy to be prized (humanly speaking) than the character she sustains in

the eyes of the world, and which necessarily presents a variety of aspects, social, religious, and moral, literary, mercantile, and military, but all fluctuating and perpetually subject to change, by reason of the imperfection inseparable from the nature and condition of man; and hence the vanity of looking for stability and consistency in the human character under any of those modifications which form the main features of society in an advanced stage of civilization. What is termed national character, lies open also to the further vanity of being subjected to the partial and erroneous judgments that spring out of the peculiar prejudices by which, in some degree, the wisest of men are liable to be influenced; and as every mind erects for itself some chosen standard of estimation, it naturally follows that what one may approve, another will condemn.

The different grades and classes which form the component parts of every community, have each some peculiar bent of mind or incidental bias, arising from social habits and connections, or professional pursuits, which will often strongly colour their sentiments, and even enter largely into their estimate of national character. The shrewd politician will sagaciously track the steps of diplomacy, thread its mazes and meanderings, and scan with scrutinizing eye the foreign and domestic bearings of national policy: in these he will find ample ground for his commendation or censure, and will pronounce accordingly.

The sapient civilian, who builds his fame and fortune on the broad basis of jurisprudence, will traverse the round of legal sciencè, thread its labyrinthine intricacies, and scrutinize its enactments and bearings; a wisely-planned system of legislation he regards as the highest stretch of human intellect, and an indication of the most perfect wisdom; he will survey the seats of judgment, and note the law's award, the eloquence of pleaders, and the erudite decision of the judges: assuming these as all-sufficient data, his conviction and estimate will be grounded on them.

The military hero, whose sanguine temperament gives a

colour to his sentiments, will regard the dauntless soul and conquering arm as the noblest test of merit and manly virtue; in his too partial eye all earthly glory is eclipsed by the splendour of gallant achievement and successful prowess; the sword will be to him the criterion of power and the symbol of authority. In judging of a nation, he will survey her military attitude, offensive and defensive, and her resources, in the spirit of a true son of Mars; will number the laurels she has won in the battle-field, and the port and bearing of her warriors: when these are in accordance with his mind, he will not withhold his approbation, nor be disposed to question the existence of merit, in his estimate, of a subordinate and inferior kind; rather he will contend that mental qualities of the first order are the essential supports of a high military character.

In every polished society, the literati form an influential body, whose suffrages are not to be won by any secondary degree of merit. To covet the estimation of these, is to aim at a worthy and noble mark: in the scale of public opinion their voice will have weight sufficient to give a current impress and value to the sentence they pronounce: for a just criterion of national character, they will look to the character and moral bearings of the popular literature of the day. Rightly they will infer the ruling taste of the community from the style and character of the press, and from the sanctioned fruits of this legitimate medium of communication. The truly judicious and excellent among these, and, it may be added, the wise and good of every class, will concur in their judgment of things most essential to the well-being, as well as to the good fame, of society at large. The glory of martial achievement will be to them as the evanescent meteor of an hour, and the fleeting and faithless, though high-sounding, voice of Fame, but as the passing echo of the desert. Rare examples of high worth, and solitary instances of grandeur of character, may claim the tribute of esteem and admiration for the individual, but show no rule for extending it further. The passport to favour that

individual merit brings, is singly the property of one, and cannot be assumed as the right privilege of many, till such merit become so general, as to form a fair sample of collective or national character.

With the truly wise and enlightened, no superficial views, no partial deductions, will suffice; they will seek beneath the surface, even to the root: aware of the reciprocal influence of literature and education, and conscious that their combined powers give form and direction to the popular taste, they will regard literary men and literary institutions as the main responsible guardians of a nation's social character. Should it appear that a sober zeal for truth and the great interests of religion have been eclipsed by a vain ostentation of learning, by the subtilties of erring reason, founded on pride of intellect, or compromised by a time-serving spirit, causing men to wander, and interposing the dark cloud of scepticism between the christian and his hope; they see in such fatal indications, not the harbingers of sure decay and ruin alone, but the wild growth of error also, which, by neglect, have spread their roots deep and wide in a soil naturally generous. If recreant genius, in the venal spirit of infidelity, be seen bending at the shrine of a false and mundane philosophy, giving the right-hand of fellowship to the enemies of truth, openly enlisting under the banners of besotted mammon, and prostituting its energies in the service of the powers of darkness, or basely perverting its talents for the sole purpose of entangling the minds of men amid the bewildering mazes of sophistry; all such indications of popular vice, all that darkens the face of society, and degrades its character, will, by the deeply judging, be referred to their primary causes, as, in fairness, must also the contrary bright and edifying manifestations of public virtue, worth, and merit, by which society is no less benefited, than its character is, in the truest sense, exalted.

But it may be said, the press, as the great medium alike of good and evil, is a monster over which literary men and literary

institutions have little or no direct control. True it is, that among many good things it brings forth sundry strange births, and monstrous too, if this word be synonymous with mischievous; but men who live (as it is termed) by their wit, might seem to want common prudence, did they, instead of consulting their purses and the taste of their customers, only consult their own hearts, and having felt the pulse of the former, and shrewdly guessed what would be palatable, neglect to supply it. There seems to be no alternative for the dependent portion of the press: if they stop short, they starve; if they please not, they starve. The cook must please the palate; and if his guest demand a strange dish, the poor fellow whose necessity bids him supply it, is not the party to be condemned. The error or fault is in the depraved appetite, and so it is with the popular taste when corrupted and vitiated; till this be improved and rectified, hands will never be wanting to minister ample food for its vicious gratification.

Education, literature, and legislation, form a kind of moral triumvirate, sharing between them the guardianship of the great social interests and the social character. Men of influence and talent, whether statesmen or men of letters, who, looking beyond private considerations, heartily concur in promoting the public good, are among the chief benefactors of mankind; and as not many can appreciate the labours of mind and its exhaustion by intense and protracted thought, they consequently can form no adequate estimate of the obligations under which they lie to men in high official stations, who thus generously devote their energies to the best interests of their fellow-men; but all the laudable endeavours of such must be futile without the co-operation of literature and education. The legislator may guard the outworks, he may control the external indications of social and moral disorder; but over its internal workings he has no power: to counteract these hidden springs of evil, he must call in the aid of literature to diffuse a moral light, to rectify the public taste, pursuits and recreations,

and to enrich it with the varied stores of useful knowledge, thus turning it from sensual to intellectual objects, from the grossest to the most refined pleasures.

To education and literature men of discrimination will always refer the prevalence of vice or virtue, of moral good or ill, and with reason conclude that, effectually to check the current of mischief, it must be arrested at its sources. Even public amusements are subject to the influence of popular literature. The drama, which with a large class is influential in no mean degree (and in great cities permanently so, as being the favourite medium of recreation), quickly catches the spirit and tone of the literature of the day. For these and similar, as well as for weightier reasons, thinking men will look to the great seats of erudition; in them the nation contemplates the foundation on which her fairest hopes are built, the key-stone of her greatness, the basis on which the column of her future worth is to be erected. The patriot, with jealous eye, will watch over them as the sacred depositories of the nation's choicest treasure; and the christian, who sees his holy faith assailed by the enemies of truth, and the besotted legions of infidelity impiously trampling under foot the sacred ensigns of redeeming love, substituting anarchy for harmony and peace, and rearing their proud banners where the standard of the cross alone should stand, will turn an eye of anxious hope towards these goodly towers of Zion as to the strongholds of christian truth, where its leaders are marshalled, and its forces trained and sent forth divinely armed, to encounter the powers of darkness, and where, of old, so many able champions, animated by a spirit of holy zeal, went forth conquering and to conquer; where also christian youth, from age to age, are taught the wonders of redeeming love, and learn to consecrate their talents to the Saviour's service. But should a faithless and recreant spirit here prevail; should religion, by neglect, be brought into contempt, and her rival, the world, be set in high dignity: betraying their high trust,

should they pour forth bands of wayward and vitiated youth to burden and distract society, all voices would join to condemn, every christian nation would rise in judgment against them.

The spirit of the times bids us hope for better things; but it is, perhaps, not possible to lay too great stress on interests of this nature. Defects there always will be, but in looking at consequences, when Education is the theme, it may be wisdom to invert the moral maxim, and view the evil rather through a magnifying medium, the better to anticipate and avert its effects; but this has sometimes been overdone. While some have sated their spleen with invective, and in thundering philippics have denounced, others in more plaintive jeremiads have deplored the abuses or evils which their apprehensions have distorted. The intemperance of zeal is a mighty magnifier, and the mountainous evils have sometimes shrunk to the size of mole-heaps when viewed by the clear light of reason. Wherever the sons of the wealthier classes are permanently congregated, there doubtless will the strongholds of youthful vanity be erected; and there entrenched, under the covert of numbers, all the forces of wit and ingenuity will be put in requisition to strengthen and fortify them. With ardent and volatile youth the spirit of enterprise and bold adventure has resistless charms; the youthful temperament has ever a keen relish for all that savours of novelty, is reckless of consequences, and always emboldened by success.

This is unquestionably a time of real danger to youthful virtue; wherever a laxity of discipline, by opening a prospect of success, flatters their wanton presumption, invention will then be stimulated, till, by progressive advances, all proper deference to authority will probably be swallowed up in a determined spirit of resistance to discipline and wise control. Doubtless every father who designs his son as a candidate for collegiate honours, has sufficient reason for prudent precaution to shield his child from those corrupting influences, which to many a hopeful youth have proved fatal. Some degree of danger

will inevitably arise from close contact and communion with those pampered and giddy scions of fortune, who being set loose from the restraints of home, and at a distance from the paternal eye, for the first time their own masters, hail their liberty with a wild determination to enjoy it after their own wanton fashion, in fellowship with kindred spirits as hopeful as themselves, and who scruple not to make the same wise resolution: these, having no definite object in view, and guided solely by their own rash and vain caprice, are dangerous companions, being as indifferent to improvement as they are hostile to subordination, and as vicious, commonly, as opportunity will permit them to be.

The vigilance of an argus is here needed to watch the hallowed precincts of genius, and the hundred gates by which juvenile folly and levity gain access to the temple of knowledge and virtue, to guard the hill of science from the intrusion of riot and impertinence, and to preserve from profanation those favourite haunts of the muses, the sacred arena of truth, and the seat of Attic inspiration.

In these classic grounds, so famed and so favourable for mental culture, the nation has oft culled the choicest fruits and flowers. She here surveys the fair plants of knowledge which her own hands have reared; to which she has been a shadow from the heat, a refuge from the storm; and to them she looks for the plentiful increase of intellectual sustenance, for the mental growth and edification of her children. Rightly she judges that where the efforts of genius are sustained by ease and independence, there social harmony and moral excellence will most happily blend, offering the fairest field for the production of virtue and the development of genius.

The idle votaries of dissipation should not be allowed to invade the arena of study, nor to disturb the calm that so well befits these classic retreats, sacred to science and literature. The noise of wanton revelry should here be hushed, nor suffered to break in upon the soothing stillness of seclusion, so congenial

to contemplation, and so favourable to the efforts of genius. Here the mind, collecting its scattered thoughts, and reassuming its energies, holds communion with the highest order of intelligences. Here philosophy, in sequestered shades, revolves the past, explores the future, and weighs the event of all; or, deep musing in the studious walks of Attic lore, with vision undisturbed, a clear horizon, and a cloudless sky, takes its broad survey, feeding high thoughts, and sending reason forth to cruise the mystic sea of speculation; or, with true wisdom and sublimer aim, labours ardently in search of the supreme good, aspiring to be blest in its possession.

The pensive student here, in quest of great example, turns the historic page, revolving in his mind heroic deeds, and minds of noblest stamp, till, glowing with a kindred flame, he burns to win an equal meed of glory; amid a galaxy of brightest names that swell the annals of old Greece and Rome, selects the worthiest as his model, bravely counts the cost, and eagerly anticipates the day that shall give him to the world, put his generous purpose to the test, and prove his patriotic, fixed resolve to serve and bless mankind.

Here, also, the embryo senator, smitten with the powers and charms of rhetoric, is first seized with divine enthusiasm by the graceful and nervous strain of Roman oratory, or fired by the masculine eloquence of the indignant Greek, as he pours forth his manly soul in a torrent of masterly invective, shaking the senate with the thunders of his eloquence, and publicly denouncing the wily Macedonian prince labouring to subvert the state, and overthrow the liberty of Greece; or deploring the degeneracy of his countrymen, strives to rouse their slumbering energies against the oppressors of their country, and to rekindle the patriotic flame, that in ages past had burned with quenchless ardour in the Athenian breast; with eloquence exhaustless as his theme, resistlessly appealing to every passion in its turn, he enlists them all in the glorious cause of freedom.

Low and debasing associations, of whatever kind, but ill

accord with feelings and pursuits so laudable and so peculiarly becoming to youth; still less is it befitting that the wanton spirit of license should profane the privacy of the youthful theologian, who with holy purpose devotes his talent and his time to the Author of his being and his hopes, and who, with firm allegiance to the Saviour's cause, makes man's redemption his high and endless theme, and his unvarying object. Worldly vanities shut out, he here retires to weigh the import of eternal things, lifting his thoughts from earth to heaven, and holding fellowship with sainted names, emulates their heavenly wisdom and their zeal, and with the vigorous eye of faith surveys their glorious triumphs and rewards.

Lastly, not always least, soul-moving poesy here oft essays its first impassioned thoughts, catches the spirit of her infant strain, and takes the hue that colours all her themes. Whether with pure intent she tune her numbers to a moral lay, touching the finer chords of human hearts, or meanly bent to please the wanton taste of grovelling sense; whether, with blended grace of thought and language, she recreate and charm the soul, or mid the day-dreams of creative mind, in all the luxury of thought, she weave, in sportive mood, her fairy wreath of fiction's brightest flowers; whether to paint fair deeds and high emprise, and by their rich reward to lure the steps of virtue to sublimer height, or touched with fire seraphic, caught from the hallowed page, she make creative power and redeeming love her rapturous theme, painting the heavenly home of saints, their triumphs and rewards, in seats of endless bliss: the gifted muse, virtue's bold champion, and truth's firm ally, is the nation's prize; but when venal and vicious, is the bane of innocence, the nation's curse, and shames its literary annals with a blot. Not mean is the task or influence of the enlightened bard, whose better office is to deck the brow of merit with a living wreath, and plant the unfading laurel on its tomb; to drag forth vice to light; to crown the memories of the good

and brave with lasting trophies, leading mankind, in hopes of winning equal praise, to emulate their worth.

In juvenile communities, whatever be the bent of individual genius, the reigning spirit, whether good or ill, that pervades the whole, will gain access to every part, influence every mind, and give a colour to its pursuits and operations. Why a college career has so often terminated unhappily, is a question that may be best solved by the parties chiefly interested, and to whom the experiment has proved fatal. True it is, that of the excellent among British worthies, not a few have here laid the foundation of their eminence and usefulness; but the great question is, What proportion does the good bear to the evil; the instances of success to those of failure? The former cannot be hidden, nor can the latter, alas! be fully known. Success will court distinction, but failure ever shuns observation; nor will any proclaim his own disgrace.

Such are the powers of the human mind, that they will often break forth and shine under any system, even, perhaps, the worst that could be contrived; its innate energies and mysterious workings will aid it to rise even against the greatest opposition. If, then, success and merit be rare, there will be less ground for praises than censure; for it cannot be doubted that the youthful mind comprises not only the elements of every excellence, but also the seeds of every virtue, when shielded from those debasing influences that undermine their innocence and pollute their minds. The means and opportunities for vicious indulgence, are the ruin of youth, and where the current of dissipation has begun to flow, it is hard to stay its course; but where it has been long flowing with increasing, though secret, force, it is perhaps scarcely possible to restrain its current. Nothing is so communicative as mind, nor so tenacious of its privileges; equally in boyhood as in manhood, when these (of which pleasure is ever most prized) are threatened, all will readily combine and make common cause.

As to the degree of liberty that it is proper for youth to enjoy, there always will be a difference of opinion. A certain writer, touching on this subject, has observed, "By one party it is said, a university student cannot be subject to those prohibitions and restraints which abridge the liberties of the school-boy." "The student ought to understand that he must act and think for himself; he is not to be for ever watched, checked, and controlled, till he fancies every thing right which is not forbidden." Such a theory is plausible enough, but how does it work? Another thus comments: "Who that considers the extensive scope afforded to this liberty of thinking and acting by the operation of a vile system of credit, can feel surprised at the ruinous expenditure of a college life? It is not asserted that this is tolerated by collusion or connivance, but that its influence is most pernicious on an unsuspecting class of generous youth, who exercise certain powers without fully feeling their responsibility, and are continually exposed to the seductive temptations of overreaching knaves." Of the mischievous tendency of such license there can be little doubt, and to the friends of these institutions it must be a subject of regret that such reasonable ground of complaint should be allowed to exist. If there be a remedy within the reach of reason, its prompt adoption must be most desirable.

With respect to the course of studies, the order and selection properly belong to those who have the chief direction of them, who are doubtless as willing as they are fully competent to fix on what is best. Touching the rival pretensions of Latin and Greek *versus* logic, or other branches of study, they have their able champions in the field, with all-sufficient umpires to decide: little need here be advanced on these points, though doubtless they involve considerations by no means undeserving the serious attention of the parties interested.

Logic, doubtless, has its merits, and may be a formidable weapon in the hand of a master spirit, but whether it is needful to lay any great stress upon it as a separate study, is

questionable: the greatest wits have perhaps been least indebted to it; and, probably, had the genius of such been cramped at the outset by its formalities, their names might never have been heard of. Whether a general exercise of its powers be not more congenial and improving to the mind of man, and whether reason unfettered and free does not attain to greater strength of comprehension, are questions; for if freedom of thought be favourable to expansion of mind, logic will gain little by the argument. The world is a great logician, and he who has much intercourse with it will want neither wit nor strength of argument: the sound mathematician is also a first-rate logician. The question of merit seems to turn chiefly on this, that if the ends of logic are attainable by other studies, and without treating it as a separate study, there will be evidently a clear gain of so much time. If one youth be put to logic, and another to Latin, for twelve months, and if the study of Latin grammar, with the right application of the rules of syntax, supply, as some are of opinion, full and equally improving exercise to the reasoning faculties, their merits on the score of reason will be on a par; but the acquisition of Latin will have given this the start of the other by the whole year; but this is assumed rather for argument sake than as matter of fact.

Logic has, however, this redeeming feature, of begetting a habit of fixing the attention, and concentrating the powers of the mind, thereby enabling it more effectually to grapple with its subject. Setting aside its merits as a science, and viewing it rather as a medium, it may, perhaps, be rendered far more subservient to the aim of education than any science that can be named, by making it the vehicle of information, employing it on chosen themes and essential points of knowledge, by bringing them under the pupil's consideration, and leading him to a right understanding on subjects of vital importance, and thus most effectually advancing the great interests of religious and moral truth. One reason, perhaps, why logic should have due limits assigned to it is, lest by habit it might beget a pedantic

spirit, and, by the food it ministers to argumentation, it should induce a disposition or tendency in the youthful mind to dispute on trivial and ordinary occasions.

Heathen literature, wherever it is in vogue, is but too apt to gain an ascendancy in the youthful breast; some solid medium of truth may therefore be needful to rectify and counteract false notions and erroneous prepossessions; for where so much that is admirable is inseparably blended with much that, to say the least, is, in a christian view, reprehensible, the good but serves more effectually to give currency to the evil. Small blame attaches to men whose chief error was want of light, but the indiscriminate reading of the pagan writers must have a questionable influence on a youthful society; for error is immutable, and ere the Christian dispensation was vouchsafed, its reign was boundless; the most popular and refined theories being often the most repugnant to the christian doctrine. The childlike simplicity, the meek and self-denying spirit of the one, is diametrically opposed to the hectoring spirit of the other, and strikingly contrasts with the attributes that enter into the composition of their favourite heroes, whose gods even were notorious rather as examples of revenge and lust, than as the patrons of virtue.

Whatever forms a stated part of youthful study, is deeply imbibed and tenaciously retained, especially when arrayed in the attractive garb of fable, and couched in impassioned language fitted to captivate the heart of open, unsuspecting youth. Whether will he who has been wantonly sporting his imagination with the levities of Ovid, turn with a feeling of welcome or disgust to the sober dictates of his Bible? How far the spirit of heathenism and the spirit of christianity will coalesce; how and in what measure they may be consistently blended and made to co-operate beneficially in the same mind, are questions for the consideration of those whose abilities have raised them to the direction of these establishments, who, from practical observation, are best informed as to the nature and bearings of

whatever may exist in the shape of error or omission, who alone have power to apply the remedy where it may be wanting: theirs is the privilege to direct, and with them also rests the responsibility. Most desirable it is that in the nurture of christian minds, the wheat should be carefully separated from the chaff; and the best friends of such establishments are doubtless those who would see them, if possible, so free from defect, that no just ground of objection should remain.

There is, perhaps, no period of human life more interesting, either as it respects youth, or their friends, or society at large, than that wherein Education resigns her charge to the world, and sends him forth, big with anticipation, to mingle in the busy or pleasurable scenes of life; when emerging from youth to manhood, he prepares to enter on that probationary career, which is to crown him with honour, or to brand him with infamy; which is to realize the fond aspirations of his friends, and the just expectations of his country; or which must consign his name to lasting ignominy, or disgraceful oblivion. If it be desirable that the course of life should terminate happily, it is essentially so that it should begin auspiciously; for the wisdom or folly that guides the first steps of life, commonly shapes its future progress, extending its influence even to the latest period of existence.

Between the expiration of the time limited for education, and the entrance on a settled course of occupation, there almost invariably intervenes a season of leisure, a vacant and unemployed portion of time, during which youth are commonly though injudiciously indulged in the dangerous liberty of self-guidance, both in the choice of their amusements and the disposal of their time; and notwithstanding the obvious ill tendency of such a practice, we find it continued and sanctioned, in a greater or less degree, by parents of every class—by the humbler classes only partially, perhaps, from circumstances of necessity; but in the higher walks of life, where its operation is pregnant with mischief, it seems to be almost universally

authorised: the consequence is, that youth are most exposed to evil at the most unguarded and critical period of their lives. Doubtless there are parents, and not a few, who wisely anticipate and provide against many dangers which threaten the virtue and happiness of their children, and of such timely precaution there is abundant need; for so varied are the seductions by which youth are beset in the polished circles of society, that the wisest provision will rarely suffice to counteract their baneful influence, or secure them from such evils as neither human penetration could foresee, nor human wisdom avert.

But, among parents, a numerous class appear to have no apprehension of danger to their offspring at this critical juncture, and little concern for its consequences; but so strange an infatuation, though it may not argue a want of natural affection, implies either a very limited knowledge of the world, a want of common prudence, or of a solid understanding. Such indifference on the part of parents evinces not only ignorance of the youthful character, but forgetfulness of their own responsibility, and a manifest insensibility to their own best interests, which are closely interwoven with those of their children. It were not reasonable to expect that strong precautionary measures should be adopted by those who do not see the need of them; nor will it be supposed that parents, who manifest such a feeling of indifference, will enforce those restrictions and salutary measures which may be requisite to repress the beginnings of evil, by effectually guarding the minds of the young against its insidious approach.

There is another description of parents whose error on this important point arises from an amiable source, or weakness rather, who suffer their judgment to be imposed on by the natural benevolence of their disposition, which raises them above suspicion of evil where there are no indications of its approach; who leading, probably, a life of domestic seclusion and tranquillity, are unconscious of the wide prevalence of evil around them, and consequently of the necessity of abstracting

youth from the sphere of its contagion. Indulgence is the hurtful extreme to which this kindly nature tends, but which, in this case, forfeits all claim to its name and character. Continued indulgence is ever most hurtful to a child, from its unhappy influence on the temper; but to youth ripening into manhood, it assumes the character of error of the worst kind and most fatal tendency. Far more cruel in its consequences is that liberty which allows them to sport on the brink of a precipice, where a false step may be fatal, than the apparent severity which forbids access to the danger, and, by denying the means and opportunity of seeking temptation, averts its consequent penalty and misery.

It might be useless, even were it possible, to define the various views and sentiments that individually prevail amid the great diversity of the parental character; but it would seem (omitting the minor shades of difference) that the majority of parents in the present age are content rather to be passive spectators of the agitated current of events, than active and interested agents in what most nearly concerns their own reputation,, as connected with the welfare of their offspring. Though few in the present enlightened time can be charged with ignorance, yet many appear unwilling to entertain a serious view of things, or to believe that their children are doomed to encounter perils so formidable, either as to their number or magnitude. The real evils of life are by such supposed to have been greatly magnified by the apprehensions of feeble and timid spirits, but to have little foundation in reality; hence it too often happens that unguarded youth (in its own experience) is fated to forego the solid advantages of life, while its evils are incurred to their greatest extent.

Unbiased by sanctioned prejudices or prevalent opinions, it behoves the sincere inquirer for truth rather to search diligently for himself, and by adhering to plain and incontrovertible facts, to derive thence those rational conclusions, which are equally proof against the power of error and the delusion of

sophistry. In adopting this straightforward mode of investigation, the first question to be determined is, whether or not the condition of youth, at the period alluded to, be one of such immediate danger; also the real nature and extent of the danger by which he is threatened. A decided conviction of his perilous state is the leading point; for if this be plainly proved, the necessity of providing against it becomes obvious; and the only remaining question will be, as to the most efficient means of counteracting the evils that set themselves in array against his peace, his virtue, and his character.

Who that retains the feelings which the sacred name of parent should ever inspire, can be an unconcerned spectator of the unequal contest between the frailty of youth and the power of worldly temptation, or witness unmoved the vain struggle of half-formed principles and unconfirmed virtue against the fascination of debasing pleasure, to which it is often an almost unresisting prey, a sad and early victim? And how must such feelings be embittered in the case of that parent who is constrained to acknowledge, in the premature fate of his own child, the manifest consequences of his neglect! How strongly do such considerations urge the necessity of parental care, and of a right judgment in things connected with the welfare of those who are so dear to them, and for the sake of preserving a clear and approving conscience in a concern so momentous and irretrievable, wherein the opportunity of timely shielding them from harm, if lost, is lost for ever, and though it must ever be regretted, yet can never be recalled!

Whether among youth some be of a gayer turn than others, or whether some may have enjoyed the advantage of a superior education, or whether, after finally quitting school, some may abide under the paternal roof for a longer, others for a shorter term, yet will our argument be in nowise affected by such accidents; because, under every change and variety of circumstance, the youthful character, in its essentials, remains unchanged, and as it ever has been the same, so must it continue

to the end of time; because at this period the season of trial begins to every individual, but terminates only with life. Whether at home or in a distant land, the same passions will operate, and commonly to an extent proportioned to the power of temptation. Every rule admits of variations, but in a general view a plain course must be adopted, and the youthful character must be taken as we find it in the aggregate—a compound of gaiety and heedlessness, a love of pleasure, and contempt for its consequences: here they stand on a level, and singularly happy is the parent who can claim an exception in favour of his own child in any of these particulars.

The most regular mode of proceeding in our inquiries will be first to ascertain the actual state of the youthful mind, when, bidding adieu to scholastic seclusion, it enters upon the wide theatre of life, mingles in its busy and festive scenes, and first tastes the mingled cup of sublunary hopes and cares. The first points to be determined are, the mental and moral acquirements of youth at this period, also their peculiar feelings and susceptibilities, and, finally, their views and motives; after which it will be profitable to ascertain, as precisely as we can, the manner in which youth are commonly permitted to spend this time, as also the most rational and profitable manner of employing it, briefly touching on the most obvious arguments for enforcing the obligation that parents and guardians are under to improve the opportunity thus afforded them for the better promoting and securing the desirable objects of life.

It will commonly be found, that when scholastic discipline has done its utmost, much will remain to be done ere youth be fitted for the world; the knowledge which it imparts is not only very limited in extent, but often of very secondary importance. Even in those branches which are chiefly available for the business of life, there is, in most cases, a manifest deficiency; whether the undue attention directed to one branch may have been the means of defrauding another of that portion of time which its superior importance may demand, as is the case when

languages, comparatively of little use in the concerns of life, are allowed to consume that time which might be more profitably occupied in acquisitions of a humbler name, perhaps, but of decidedly greater utility. In every case omissions may be found, nor can it indeed be well supposed that it should be otherwise, considering the heedless temperament of youth, and how greatly the attention is divided by the diversified objects of modern education; whatever be the cause, the effect is certain, and the inference obvious.

In glancing at the moral progress of the youthful mind at this period, and its acquisitions in the knowledge of Divine truth, we are entering upon very doubtful ground, and much delicacy is requisite in order to avoid imputations, which, if too general, might seem to strike a mark at which they aimed not. The happiest exceptions are to be met with; that they are not more common is to be regretted. Sound practical information on these most essential points, so desirable in itself, so exalted and honourable in its aim, has long been unaccountably, and, till recently, almost universally neglected. Here it must be confessed that youth appear to stand on one common level of ignorance, whatever be the measure of their other acquirements; and what renders this general deficiency of youth the more remarkable is, that every preceptor is at full liberty to frame and improve his own system at will, and so embody in it that measure of moral and Divine knowledge which is most consonant with his views and convictions, with the readiest mode of imparting it to the youthful mind.*

Were it practicable, it would, perhaps, not be advisable, to investigate the minutiæ and details of scholastic deficiencies; but it is evident that modern Education is decidedly at fault on many primary points of Christian knowledge, as connected with a proper estimate of men and things. Can it be deemed no indispensable part of a father's duty to inquire whether his

* In many establishments, public and private, religious instruction is now becoming an object of primary attention.

son has gained that knowledge which is needful for his safe guidance in the world, to rectify his views of the end of his existence, and to lead him to discriminate between the solid and the superficial, preferring the former, however plain, to the latter, however dazzling? Are his hopes rationally grounded, and has he learned the dubious nature of that success which is grafted on the precarious favour of the world? Has Education taught him an inviolable regard to truth and rectitude, and shown him the beauty and dignity of virtue? Has he learned the uncertain tenure of life, and the right occupation of his talents, with a due sense of his own frailty, and hourly dependence on the Author of his being? And does he understand his relation and obligation to the Son of God, the great Redeemer of mankind? Does he honour his parents in the spirit of love and meekness? In brief, has Education given him a right view of his best interests, with motives and means to direct him in pursuit of them? We are told, perhaps, that Education does not profess to do all this—it cannot be expected that it should; but has it endeavoured to do it? or rather, in the majority of cases, has the attempt been made, under the fixed conviction of its forming an essential part of scholastic education?

With few exceptions, it has seemingly not been deemed needful to lay any positive stress on knowledge of this kind, which is rather left to be experimentally gleaned at some indefinite period in the world, and, at all hazards, in promiscuous intercourse with society. But if there be a knowledge of power to shield the young from the delusions of error, it will be difficult to give a satisfactory reason why it is to be thrust aside and superseded by acquisitions which, however desirable for the temporary advantage they confer, must ever sink into insignificance when compared with that knowledge which is subservient to the noblest ends to which man can aspire. How lightly soever a truly religious education may be appreciated by the vain and frivolous, they may be assured

that, without it, all other acquirements will prove comparatively worthless.

With reference to modern Education, on these points let the unprejudiced parent declare his convictions in the case of his own children, or those that happen to come under his observation, and he will not unfrequently, perhaps, find youth finished, as it is termed, without one well-regulated affection, without one principle rightly fixed in the breast. How rarely can we trace in modern youth the rise of christian graces! Even that amiable docility and ingenuous modesty which are, or ought to be, so peculiarly their own, are often so little apparent, that their growth would seem rather to have been checked than forwarded. Humility is certainly not the characteristic of youth of the present day; and yet it must be confessed that the want of it affords but a slender promise of a truly christian character in manhood.

Though more might perhaps be advanced relative to this part of our subject, enough, it is presumed, has been adduced to prove the insufficiency of scholastic attainments for the purposes of life, and if so, no additional argument will be needful to urge the necessity of devoting the ensuing period to serious application, not only to remedy actual defects, but to shield the youthful mind from present dangers, and also to arm it against approaching trials.

No parent can reasonably expect that mere scholastic tuition should even aim at so comprehensive a scheme of Education, much less that it should fully succeed in accomplishing a design of such worth and magnitude, which the volatile constitution of youth renders as arduous as it is desirable. In few instances that meet our observation does it appear to have been attempted, or even contemplated, on so lofty a scale, at least the result is apparently a decided failure; but admitting that in many cases the failure had been but partial, it would not weaken the necessity of using all possible means of rectifying deficiencies which might be fraught with dangerous, if not fatal, consequences.

That education which does not prepare a youth to sustain his allotted part (how contrary soever to his views and wishes) with patience, firmness, and integrity, which neither forewarns nor forearms him against the wiles and delusion of the world, is assuredly defective in the most essential point.

If ripening youth be indeed the time of peculiar peril, nothing that has hitherto been advanced will, it is presumed, be deemed superfluous, and every prudent parent will concede that he has an aim of primary importance to compass, when the child of his future hopes, and heir of his fortunes, bidding a final adieu to the seclusion of studies, looks up to him for light and parental counsel, which the doubtful path of life, now opening before him, renders so needful and salutary.

If it be asked, When does youthful virtue need the strongest guard? the obvious reply is, When exposed to the greatest danger; and such, in every age, has been the season we allude to; but in the present age the power of temptations is doubled by the blandishments of modern luxury. Never was there a period when the virtue of youth was exposed to so many and such powerful assaults as now, when shameless vice borrows with impunity all the exteriors of elegance and refinement.

Some parents there are who seem disposed to treat such apprehensions as rather visionary than real; they discern but little need for abridging the liberty of their offspring, and denying their own indulgent dispositions. They of course will not be at the pains of obviating, by timely precaution, those dangers which they know only by report, or seem unwilling to credit; but such, ere they rashly decide, will do well to bestow a little consideration on a few interesting questions connected with the future welfare of their children.

Supposing, then, that by an equal mixture of indulgence and imprudence, youth are at this critical juncture left to their own guidance, as is too frequently the case, must we not enumerate, among the certain evils resulting from such an error, the loss of time, which at this age is above all price,

involving, as it surely does, the loss of talent, and of all the advantages derived from it; the probable loss of innocence and of virtuous habits; and may we not add, at least, the partial loss even of what had been previously acquired during the term of instruction? Few, it is presumed, can look upon such consequences with apathetical indifference, as mere trivial occurrences; a little reflection must suffice to produce a contrary conviction. Does not such ill-judged liberty leave youth at the mercy of a thousand false impressions, and in danger of a thousand false steps, where each may be fatal? Have they who absurdly contend that there is no necessity for imposing so heavy a yoke on the free agency of the youthful mind, entered into its views and feelings, and duly appreciated its romantic and sanguine temperament? Hope's ready pencil is at hand, and, guided by the magic of youthful fancy, lends all the charms of fiction to what is unknown and unexplored. The void of inexperience is quickly filled with the vivid colourings of extravagant anticipations; all the pomp and parade of ambition and pleasure are made to pass in splendid review, and imagination luxuriates in the prospect; ever prone to quit the plain form of substantial happiness, and as ready to court its vain shadow in the regions of novelty; but the corrupting influence of error, and the dangers that threaten youthful virtue, are greatly multiplied when, by parental indulgence, in addition to the too prevalent spirit of levity and irreligion, the natural giddiness of the young is stimulated to the intoxication of folly, and its headlong propensities put in play without a check.

No previous education, how excellent soever, will be found available in such cases to arrest the wayward progress of a wanton will, that has been permitted to overleap the bounds of temperate restraint, and to range the pathless wilds of licentiousness. Education wisely commenced, if it be thus foolishly terminated, resembles the careful guidance of the helpless when dangers are at a distance, and leaving them to

encounter, single-handed, the assaults of enemies when they are multiplying and encamping around them.

The transition from a course of study and seclusion to the power of absolute self-disposal, creates a vacuum in the restless mind of youth, and throws it upon its own weak resources. The void will consequently be supplied in such a manner as may seem to promise the greatest share of present satisfaction; abstract principles and half-formed resolutions will lose their force, and quickly fade away before the exciting impressions of present pleasure. From the humblest to the most exalted station youth are thus exposed to peril; for their passions are the same, and the briefest period is commonly found long enough to generate those pernicious impressions, which continued liberty can hardly fail to perpetuate.

There are some parents who think, and with apparent reason, that it is as well to allow youth a little liberty for experience' sake, and to put their discretion to the test, deeming it advisable they should begin to think and act for themselves, in order to gain that incipient experience and insight into the movements of society, which is thought to be the sole medium of a becoming confidence in the juvenile enterpriser; and youth are themselves the willing advocates of a doctrine so flattering to that self-sufficiency of which, whatever they may lack in other matters, they seldom fail to bring home an ample stock. In doubtful cases reason ever recommends the safer side; and it is pretty well ascertained that the mischievous consequences arising from keeping youth under too tight a rein have been exceeded a thousand-fold by the incomparably worse evils resulting from the contrary extreme of liberty: the rein can scarcely be held too firmly till it can be relaxed with safety; and the more gradually youth are emancipated from restraint the better, for at this critical period it often proves the best, if not the only safeguard of innocence.

Some parents hold the opinion, that by giving their children

an expensive education (which, in fact, ought to be equivalent to a good one), and then fixing them in that profession or pursuit which has been judged most eligible, they have conscientiously fulfilled the parental charge, and that consequently no further responsibility can attach to them; but even such may possibly be undeceived by the event, as others have been; and well if it be not too late. Never let it be again repeated, should paternal authority and parental counsel be prematurely withdrawn by those who really estimate their own peace of mind, or the happiness of those whom a wise Providence has rendered dependent on their care and protection.

It is doubtless in many cases desirable, and even requisite, that youth should spend two or three years beneath the paternal roof ere they launch into the world, and this opportunity may by every prudent parent be turned to good account. The kind and degree of knowledge acquired may be fully ascertained; the social affections may be fathomed; the strength of the moral principle and the mental stamina will be tried and known. Now or never errors and deficiencies must be remedied; now also is the time to impart that needful knowledge which is not learned in schools, but without which the whole range of literature is of mere nominal worth—a wisdom superior to the world, combined with a shrewd insight into men and manners, without which virtue itself will often serve but to betray its possessor.

Parental weakness has ever been one main source of juvenile folly; hence also this inestimable opportunity is often consumed in indolence, or dissipated in trivial pursuits, tending only to impair that dignity and purity, which, when duly cherished, is as natural as it is becoming to the ingenuous character of youth. But presumption is of rapid growth when fostered by the excessive liberty of a too indulgent home; youthful frailty then runs to every foolish extreme by turns, and easy it is to predict the contemptible character of the future man, from the frivolous occupations of the youth. On the other hand, as

plainly can we foresee the honourable career of a worthy and talented mind, whose mental and religious culture has been the laudable object of paternal solicitude. Nor is the subsequent period less perilous to youthful virtue, when home is relinquished for professional pursuits; on the contrary, to many this is the crisis of danger, of new and multiplied seductions. Whether their destination be the army or the navy, the seats of learning, the inns and courts of law, or to attend the medical establishments of the metropolis, in each of these walks will be opened a wide field of temptation, strengthened by the example and persuasion of those who have previously run the giddy round of excitement. Emerging from comparative seclusion, and probably for the first time released from all control, with time and money at their disposal, it is no wonder that, in the struggle between vicious inclinations and virtuous resolves, so few return victors from the conflict; and it would argue a voluntary ignorance or self-delusion in any parent to expect that, without the requisite and previous care, his child should be found among the number of those who have honourably acquitted themselves in the rugged path of duty.

Among parents of a serious and reflecting turn, not a few have been disposed to ascribe, in part, the corruption of youthful morals to the innovation of foreign manners. Since the increased intercourse between Britain and the continent, doubtless this may be assumed as a secondary cause; but the extent of such influence being doubtful, candour will forbear the imputation as ungenerous, so long as a probability exists of tracing the mischief to a less doubtful or extraneous source. Whatever be the cause, it is evident that the traits of dissimilarity are (in certain circles of society) fast wearing away, partly, perhaps, in consequence of the great influx of strangers of late years, and chiefly from the shores of modern Gaul; but though among these many may be of doubtful standing, as to their moral grade, the mischief is, perhaps, chiefly to be

apprehended from a very different quarter, viz. from the crowds of British youth whose ambition or curiosity leads them to make the tour of Europe.

What can be expected of youth having time and money at command, and impelled by the desire of seeing the world on both sides (a knowledge they have perhaps often heard lauded at home), to whom a continental tour is little better than a wild chace after novelty, hurrying from place to place (limited time forbidding sufficient delay for solid purposes of utility, or for the cultivation of desirable connections), and exploring the public resorts, contriving to make the most of a short time? They consume it, perhaps, in the leading haunts of dissipation, where the worst portion of society is promiscuously congregated. Few who frequent the high places of profligacy escape without a taint of corruption: where licentiousness is decked out with inviting attractions, its seductions are overpowering often to strong minds; much greater is the danger and folly of suffering heedless youth to plunge into the worst vortices of dissipation. To make matters worse, the time thus spent is considered as a sort of holiday, in which some extra liberty is quite allowable; but since vice of every kind being rapidly contagious (how new or foreign soever its nature), and blending readily with social excitement, too readily captivates the youthful heart; and because those virtuous characteristics, which are peculiar to a people, are by no means so easily communicable, the consequence to the inexperienced and sanguine may easily be inferred.

Young men of a generous turn, who hold it as a mark of good breeding to show a deference to strangers, are therefore prone to enter the more warmly into their sentiments and habits, and are proud of thus evincing that they are superior to the influence of narrow prepossessions; but in their haste to throw off the semblance of illiberal prejudice, there is danger lest they wholly divest themselves also of that sedate moral demeanour, which forms the best safeguard of their virtue. The probable event of such a tour will be, that a youth has

rapidly skimmed over the surface of the worst part of society in all the great capitals of Europe; and if such travellers increase in number and activity, we may ere long search in vain among British youth for any trace of the plain but sterling qualities by which the old-fashioned English character was sustained and dignified.

Having endeavoured to trace the various sources of juvenile folly, whether originating in a faulty education, in parental error, or the natural frailty of the youthful character, as well as the dangers peculiar to the season of incipient manhood; having thus attempted to depict the evil and to detect its origin, with a view to its cure, it only remains for the author to avow his settled conviction (in which many, he trusts, will concur,) that a truly enlightened religious education alone supplies the sovereign remedy we are in quest of, and is found, by those who make the experiment, to be as easy and natural as it is efficacious. Few will contend that the sacred scriptures are not admirably adapted to instruction, and, as the proper and authorised medium of truth, most worthy to take the lead in christian education. From happy indications in the spirit of the times, the honest-minded christian may freely indulge the hope that the auspicious era is not remote when the vain but too fashionable idols of scepticism and infidelity shall wholly succumb to the purity and majesty of Divine truth; and a happy omen will it be for Britain when its heart-improving and soul-elevating oracles are unanimously received as the criterion of character in every station, and the test of education for all ranks and professions.

Purposing in a future essay to treat the question of religious instruction at large, and in a manner befitting its importance, no apology can be needful for having thus briefly alluded to this interesting subject in concluding the present essay.

ESSAY V.

TESTIMONY DERIVED FROM ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY, ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE POWER OF EDUCATION, AND EXEMPLIFYING ITS INFLUENCE ON THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF PRINCES, INVOLVING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HAPPINESS—POPULAR IGNORANCE; OR TIMES OF UNIVERSAL DEPRAVITY, AND THE DARK AND UNLETTERED AGES, SYNONYMOUS—THE PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS OF KNOWLEDGE—THE OPERATION OF SCIENCE AND VIRTUE COMPARED.

In addition to the many and weighty reasons in favour of a sound Christian education, the experience of every day brings home to the heart its ready tribute of conviction; while, from the valuable records of the historian and the biographer, we derive a mass of evidence that is at once satisfactory and conclusive. Well-authenticated history has ever been regarded as a manual of true practical wisdom—a moral treasury, containing the collective experience of all preceding times; and to it the philanthropist and the statesman have been ever indebted for their most available knowledge. While the biographical portions chiefly attract the attention of the philosopher, the politician marks the fluctuation of public events, with the view of exploring their latent causes; to him it is a political chart, delineating the rocks and shoals which have proved fatal to princes, and on which the prosperity of empires has been wrecked.

Nothing can be more instructive and interesting than this favourite study of the sage, whence alone he may derive a faithful estimate of human nature in all its varied conditions

and circumstances. Characters are here displayed in their true light, and their secret springs of action developed by the connection of events. Worldly policy, with its short-sighted plans, its selfish passions and objects, may here be duly appreciated; while ambition is seen wearying itself in the pursuit of things worthless in themselves, and often destructive in their consequences. The Christian here discerns the movements of the Almighty hand, that changes times and seasons, and appoints to each its period: here also the brief triumphing of the wicked is made fully apparent.

To youth, history holds the best mirror of instruction, by giving them rational and enlarged conceptions of all that can laudably interest their minds; while the manly virtues pourtrayed in their native strength and genuine colour, can hardly fail to inspire them with corresponding sentiments.

In taking a comprehensive view of mankind, the mind is forcibly struck with the infinite diversity, not merely of local customs, of individual genius and pursuits, but also of those marked distinctions of national character peculiar to each. Nation is less distinguished from nation by language, or by the natural boundaries of seas and mountains, than by those peculiar characteristics, which form often a decided contrast between bordering states, even when socially connected by motives of policy, or the reciprocal interests of commerce. The polished inhabitants of the various European states, as well as the numerous uncivilized tribes of Africa or America, bear each the indelible impress of the land of their fathers. Asiatic distinctions are well known; and the gravity of the Spaniard, the levity of the Frenchman, and the phlegm of the Dutchman, have long been proverbial. Englishmen have their known peculiarities; and the generous but sanguine temperament of the sons of the sister isle, exhibits often as marked a dissimilarity to the calculating prudence of the Caledonian, as may well be conceived. To follow such distinctions throughout their minor details would be fruitless were it practicable; it is

sufficient to note, that such diversity obtains, and has always existed, even among the earliest constituted societies of mankind. By whatever theories some may attempt to solve this characteristic problem, certain it is, that so long as we attribute to Education a power of moulding the human character, we must also impute to its influence, not the mere shadings of character, but chiefly also, if not exclusively, the most exalted and honourable distinctions by which humanity is ennobled and adorned.

History, in reference to Education, is a plain and practical illustration of its power, and wherever its beneficial agency has been wanting, habit, example, and prejudice, have supplied its place, to which Education itself is scarcely superior. Though the history of any particular era may suffice, in some measure, to develope the foldings of the human character in its variety and versatility, yet the motives of conduct lie more open to observation in the earlier stages of society, ere the mental bias had been swayed or disguised by the complicated influences and artificial systems of society, so widely prevalent in modern times; consequently we see them pourtrayed in all their native energy and strength in the once mighty commonwealths of Greece and Rome, ere the reign of corruption had commenced; hence the instructive records of those interesting epochs have been at all times the favourite reference of the moral philosopher, as supplying a code of practical wisdom for all succeeding ages, applicable not merely to our own times, but in all probability equally available till the final consummation of probationary existence. The springs and movements of the intellectual machinery are here plainly discernible, and the passions that alternately agitate the private and the public mind, stand out in bold relief.

The strong hand of Time, which has subverted the power and grandeur of Rome, has yet preserved and handed down to us the story of her wondrous elevation, and of her still more rapid decline and disgrace. In her rise we view the proper

fruit of superior virtue; in her fall, the direct consequence of her subsequent corruption and degeneracy. At leisure, we may contemplate her in the sunshine and in the storm: emerging at first from obscurity, then towering and exulting in the zenith of her power, and trampling under foot the thrones and dominations of the earth; awing the nations with her voice, and sending forth her victorious eagles to receive the homage of mankind. The treasures of the east and the west were poured into her lap, princes were her subjects, and her citizens were as kings; till, intoxicated with pride, and enervated by licentious arts, all public and private virtue became gradually eclipsed by an all-pervading spirit of degeneracy, which, prophetic of her fall, fatally paved the way for an easier conquest to the barbarous and invading hordes that so rapidly overran the empire, spreading dismay and devastation amid those smiling and happy seats which had been so dearly purchased by the virtue and valour of the sires, and thus shamefully forfeited by the folly and infatuation of their sons.

In the plenitude of their grandeur, both Greece and Rome were the native seats of eloquence and of patriotism; the arts and the virtues were equally matured in the stimulating soil of a generous rivalry. Both owed their rise to the temperate virtues, to the contempt of danger, and the desire of honourable fame, which was early instilled into the minds of their youth; and, till wealth introduced luxury and corruption, disunion and decay, the career of each was marked by the like energy and splendour. But although Rome may display as ample a field as Greece for the exhibition of every noble and manly talent, yet the history of the latter is, perhaps, more replete with instruction, as being divided into numerous small and independent states, not unfrequently pursuing different and even opposite lines of policy, producing that collision of interests, by which the motives and characters of men are ever most strongly developed.

It is scarcely possible to conceive a more decided contrast

than is exhibited in the different systems of policy adopted by the rival states of Athens and Sparta, or Lacedæmon; a cursory view of each may assist the judgment in its solution of the striking difference evinced in the genius and manners of those rival aspirants for fame and power; it will also supply a strong instance of the efficacy of that mode of training, which in so short a time produced so remarkable a dissimilitude between two neighbouring cities of one common origin and language. On the one hand, we see Athenian liberty degenerating into license; on the other, we behold the Spartan discipline assuming the sternness of slavish restraint. The favourite Spartan maxim, that "Those only are safe who are strong," seems to have been the main actuating principle by which every thing among these militant Greeks, whether of a private or public nature, was regulated.

With Lycurgus originated an entirely new form of government, and wholly of a martial character, which, whatever were its defects, was shrewdly adapted to the exigencies of the times, subsequently obtaining for Sparta that preponderance among the Grecian states, it would otherwise never have acquired. The great revolution he singly and speedily effected in the government and manners of such a people, affords a manifest proof that the energies of his mind were of no common order, enabling him effectually to quell the popular discontents, and to combat successfully the violent factions of the leading men in the state, who, from powerful motives of private interest, were decidedly inimical to his designs; but, dauntless himself, all that emanated from him breathes the like resolute spirit; hence we see him rising superior to every obstacle, and gathering fresh strength with opposition.

The laws of Lycurgus made no distinction between rich and poor, but subjected even the king to the control of the senate, which he first instituted as a barrier between democracy and despotism, checking alternately the encroachments of the prince and the people. By his vigorous and skilful policy, he

brought about an equal distribution of lands and goods, so that distinctions and honours were attainable only by superior merit. In order to reduce fortunes to a level, he instituted iron money in lieu of gold and silver, the use of which he abolished. The coin was so weighty, that the value of a few shillings was scarcely portable, and carts and oxen were employed to transport a few pounds, which was so bulky, as nearly to fill a Spartan cottage. This money was of little use, not being current among the other Grecian states; they were ashamed of the ridicule it excited, and thus learned to despise it. Diet, diversions, exercise, every thing was prescribed by law; and the life of the citizens was a system of discipline. The city resembled a camp—every hour brought its appointed duty, and to have affected a choice, would have incurred public punishment; hence alternate abstinence and exercise was the order of the day at Lacedæmon.

Private luxury was abolished by a law ordaining that all meals should be taken in public, to which every citizen contributed his monthly supply; and so strictly was it enforced, that Agis, their king, returning victorious, was severely reprimanded for having eaten with his queen in private. To the youth these meals were a school of temperance; nor was any conversation tolerated that bordered on levity. Among the more wealthy, as may be supposed, many were refractory, and frequent tumults were excited; but the wisdom and moderation of Lycurgus at length subdued this spirited people.

Fully aware of the influence of early habit, the education of the Spartan youth was a primary object with the legislator, and, as might be expected, was a system of unremitted subjection, self-denial, and fatigue. Plutarch asserts that they would rather die than flinch, and, in confirmation of it, relates the well-known fact of a boy who, having stolen a fox, and hid it under his coat, suffered the animal to tear his bowels, rather than disclose the theft; and this single well-attested anecdote strongly exemplifies the Spartan policy. Their unrivalled

bravery has become proverbial; nay, so much did they depend on their personal prowess, that, contrary to the usage of those warlike times, the city was without walls; and so rigid was the discipline within, that the camp and war were to them, comparatively, a refreshment, because they there enjoyed greater liberty. Their courage, however, was not without an alloy of wanton barbarity towards their slaves (Helotes), numbers of whom were, at times, inhumanly massacred. Thucydides relates that two thousand disappeared at one time. On such occasions, it appears, the youth were permitted to conceal themselves in the woods by day, and at night slaughter all they could find, by way, it should seem, of exercising their martial prowess, and putting the quality of their mettle to the proof.

The polite arts, and even knowledge, were, in a manner, banished from Sparta; oratory, poetry, and philosophy, were discountenanced; and sculpture and painting were forbidden, as tending to enervate the public mind; even music was limited to certain instruments and to national songs. One man was banished for professing to discourse a whole day on a given subject; and another had his harp nailed up for stretching one string beyond its usual pitch. By a selfish and Chinese kind of policy, narrow and jealous, free intercourse was interdicted, lest vice should be imported into a city where novelty was a crime. Their sphere of observation, as well as of action, being thus confined, all genius was damped by uniformity; nor were the social passions allowed proper room for play. Their sole idea of virtue centered in bravery; by it all honours were engrossed, and all private ambition directed into one public channel of heroism and military exploits, in which they mightily excelled. Remarkable for austerity of manners, forbidding to strangers, their youth were at this period as reserved as statues, and almost as dumb. All were virtuous, but it was from necessity, and the power of habit, rather than from the pure and abstract love of goodness: virtue they affected, but its great essential, benevolence, was wanting.

The Athenian policy was in all respects the reverse: popular restraints were few; wealth and an indulgent government favoured luxury and licentiousness; but a virtuous nature, having a larger scope, attained to sublimer heights. An ancient writer has remarked, "The Athenians who were virtuous, were transcendantly so, being truly and unfeignedly good, without necessity or constraint;" but it may also be gathered from their history, that such as were rogues and traitors, were pre-eminently so, equally a disgrace to their country and to humanity. But Athens is to this day justly celebrated as having been the seat of politeness and the liberal arts, as well as the fountain-head of philosophy. The Athenians were also as distinguished for their amiable and social qualities, as the rival state was reputed for their contraries: the universal benevolence inculcated by the one, seems not to have entered into the conception of the other.

The wide range of history cannot, perhaps, supply a more instructive lesson, nor a more striking illustration of the power of education or training on the human mind, than that by which the genius and manners of a people so noted for their characteristic energy, were changed, and, as it were, moulded anew at the will of a single individual. Education, in the hands of Lycurgus, was an engine to produce a physical effect for a political purpose; his first great object was to render them an invincible and conquering people, rightly judging that this was the leading requisite towards attaining and preserving a supremacy in Greece. His whole policy appears to have been subservient to this sole aim; and the end was fully answerable to his design, insomuch that Sparta, or Lacedæmon, which, with its dependent territory, contained a population of not more than forty thousand at its most flourishing period, yet, with this handful of men, it long gave laws to Greece. Lycurgus reaped in measure as he sowed; his cherished expectation was accomplished, but it was unaccompanied by those advantages which would have flowed from more liberal

and enlightened views. The best feature in his system was, perhaps, the abolition of wealth, by which he may be said, virtually, to have banished avarice, luxury, fraud, and corruption, with their attendant evils, from the state.

Athens was certainly faulty in the other extreme. Had the ascetic discipline of the one been blended with the harmonizing refinement of the other; had the elegant but erring genius of Athens been tempered with a wholesome leaven of Spartan discipline, the good of both might have been ensured, and the alternate calamities of each would perhaps have been obviated: for if erroneous systems be so mighty to effect their object, what noble fruits might not a liberal and well-digested plan of instruction have in due time produced, in a mental soil of such a quality, and in which, though labouring under such manifest disadvantages, it could so rapidly attain to an unrivalled and unprecedented pre-eminence!

It would be easy to multiply examples from history, wherein national peculiarities may be traced to modes of education, and such a conclusion is perfectly consonant with the plainest reasoning, for whatever affects the component part, proportionally influences the whole; and as it is granted that Education forms the individual character, and as the aggregate or national character is composed of individuals, it will manifestly be influenced in exact proportion to the number so trained. On the supposition, therefore, that three-fourths of a community be well instructed, it seems but fair and reasonable to infer that the diffusion of so general an example would very materially influence the character of the remaining portion.

To how great an extent the individual character is swayed and modified by Education, has been already considered in a former essay; but were the proofs of rational argument wanting, it would receive abundant confirmation from the biographical portions of history, where we almost invariably find Education producing its intended result, notwithstanding

it may, like every thing else, be subject to exceptions in some striking instances, wherein the ruling passion has been too powerfully excited, and not unfrequently by the intervention of alluring objects of ambition, rivalry, or desire.

Observations of this kind may apply to such characters as Alexander and Alcibiades, both pre-eminently distinguished for their rank and superior natural endowments, and who each enjoyed also the more solid advantages resulting from the precepts, example, and counsel, of the most celebrated philosophers of their times. The former, who has been dignified with the title of Great, and who has figured so conspicuously among earthly conquerors, is a remarkable instance of the noblest qualities and virtues finally perverted by unbridled licentiousness. Formed from infancy to manhood by Aristotle, the great master of rhetoric, aided by the counsel and martial example of Philip, his father, a wise and politic prince; favoured by such a conjuncture of auspicious circumstances, in addition to the most excellent gifts of mind and body; he was sanguine, but not refractory, and as fondly devoted to the study of philosophy as attached to his preceptor, in allusion to whom he used to say that he was indebted to Philip for his life, but to Aristotle for living well. Morality was his favourite study when young, and his progress kept pace with his advantages. At an early age he comprehended the connexion between strict virtue and sound policy; and so solid was his education, that its salutary impress influenced his conduct during the greater part of his triumphant career, maintaining an ascendancy over his passions, and guiding even his ambition; till, intoxicated by continued success, this descendant of Hercules, as redoubtable as his reputed progenitor, fell an untimely sacrifice at the shrine of the syren excess, by whose fatal power he was precipitated from the highest pinnacle of earthly glory to a premature and dishonourable grave, in the very prime of his manly vigour.

In Alcibiades we recognize the like mental energy blended

with a corresponding ardour of passion: equally favoured by nature, and enjoying, it may be, even greater advantages in the guidance and friendship of Socrates, the faithful counsellor of his youth, we yet behold all these advantages eventually neutralized by the fatal ascendancy of the ruling passion. Virtue was the early and engrossing idol of his soul, nor was it surrendered without repeated struggles; often, indeed, was its brightness partially obscured, and as often did it regain its wonted splendour, ere it was finally and totally eclipsed. In the intervals of calm reflection, when the violence of passion had subsided, reason and virtue quickly reassumed their empire in his generous heart; but, in the vortex of public or private excitement, and amid the tumult of conflicting passions and desires, the mild and sapient accents of the great and good Socrates were unheard and unheeded.

As Education is to be estimated by the good that it effects, and the evil it prevents or counteracts, its importance must vary with its application, and rise in proportion to the degree of power and influence attending the superior stations in society; for, supposing the prince and the peasant to be equally well instructed, no one will contend that they therefore possess equally the means of benefiting their fellow-creatures, because the privileged station of the former confers on him the means of doing good or evil on an incomparably greater scale than the latter; the inference therefore is obvious, and receives abundant confirmation in the details of history, ancient and modern.

Ample is the list that has been transmitted to our times, of such as have been invested with power, by a wise and good Providence, for the benefit of mankind; and equally numerous, perhaps, are the names of that class, equally noble by birth, but base and degenerate by nature, and unimproved by culture, whose names have been consigned to infamy, and to whom succeeding ages have pointed the finger of merited scorn, who apparently were raised up by the hand of incensed Deity as

the scourge of their offending fellow-creatures; but in either, and in every case, Education leagued with power supplies the mightiest of human means to work its effect, whether baneful or beneficent.

It is not needful, in quest of illustration, always to explore the antiquated page of sometimes questionable authenticity, while the well-attested records of our native land, and in recent times, lie open to the scrutiny of the candid inquirer. In the annals of Britain we discern no era more remarkable than that of the Reformation, whether we contemplate the chief actors or the leading events during that interesting period, exhibiting sudden and total changes in the internal policy of the realm, giving a new aspect to the face of affairs, both foreign and domestic, controlling the destiny of millions, and pregnant with consequences which will probably extend to the remotest generations.

In glancing at the protracted tyranny of Henry VIII., especially during the latter years of his sanguinary administration, what a picture does England present! The accumulated horrors of the period are too generally known to need a recapitulation. Himself the slave of ungovernable desires, his mind was a wretched chaos of internal disorders, and the stronghold of rebellious passions, which, armed with despotic power, were like the beasts of the forest, ever rushing forth to destroy—not an unapt emblem of the anarchy that raged throughout his dominions.

There is reason to believe, from the early biography of this prince, that had he, instead of being pampered and flattered, been "trained" from childhood "in the way he should go," the picture might have been reversed; but, unhappily, his education was (for a prince) defective in the main point, for he was not taught the needful art of self-government; and whatever were his other acquirements, moral principle—or virtue, properly so called—was certainly not conspicuous among them. The natural seed of vice, which it should have been

the business of Education to root out from his mind, was quickly matured in the rank soil of the times, eventually choking the better feelings and sentiments of a heart naturally generous, but fatally perverted by the ascendancy of a pampered and arbitrary will. Remarkable, when young, for personal beauty, his passions, which needed restraint, were without doubt fostered by selfish and designing sycophants, (the terræ-filial breed, some of whom are to be found in every court where corruption finds place and favour,) and, confirmed by habitual gratification, naturally became impatient of control, tending to consequences subversive ultimately of his own peace, and of the welfare of his subjects.

But, even supposing the errors in his education to have been neither many nor great, we are then led to the conclusion that they were greatly nourished and multiplied by subsequent ill counsel and example, to the corrupting influence of which we must look for the source of those polluted streams of violence and misery, that deluged his kingdom, and disgraced his sceptre.

By extending our view to Mary and Elizabeth, the daughters of Henry, we find more ample illustration, and more conclusive evidence; nor is it easy to conceive a more decided contrast, whether as regards the individuals, or the different effects of their administration. The austerity and bigotry of Mary, which subsequently produced such bitter fruits to the nation, were the natural results of the illiberal prejudices, early and artfully infused into her mind. Her ominous accession was the signal for superstition to unfurl her blood-stained banner, and kindle the torch of persecution at the altar of Rome: bigotry, arrayed in terrors, with giant strides stalked through the land; while the black train of fiendish passions followed in the rear, trampling under foot the sacred and social rights of humanity. The distracted nation was thus rent by discordant factions, which, like the sanguinary beasts of the desert, preyed upon its vitals with uncontrolled malignity. Such were among the ill consequences of Mary's education: from the single seed

of error planted in her breast, sprang this dire harvest, with all its deadly consequences.

But it may here justly be remarked, that the superstition and its attendant calamities, having one common origin, and flowing in the same channel, should rather be imputed to Rome, their true source, than to Mary, the unconscious agent of its sinister designs. It may be added, that the fate of Mary claims commiseration rather than censure, as being the victim of superstition, an instrument moulded by, and subservient to, a crafty papal policy, which however, in this instance, was so short-sighted as to over-reach itself, or rather, was wisely overruled by a retributive Providence. With the ancient christian teacher we may exclaim, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"—and the following suggestions naturally arise in the mind: of how dangerous and deadly a nature is error, when blended with religious zeal! how easily does it gain access to the mind! and how fatally does it subvert all its powers, and subject them to its dark dominion!

The charge of error against Rome, here applies chiefly to her corrupt and intriguing policy during that gloomy and lengthened era which forms so foul a stain in the annals of Christendom. Happily for mankind, the dark reign of persecution has passed: to ignorance, intelligence has succeeded, and its light is now too widely diffused to be in danger of a second eclipse. The virtuous and inquiring portion of mankind are daily advancing in all knowledge, and are every where meeting on the broad level of truth; the friends of genuine Christianity, it is to be hoped, have therefore little to fear; but even were it otherwise, religious controversy is by no means the object of the present design.

But though the merits or demerits of the Romish creed and doctrine form no part of the present discussion, yet the papal policy having been so blended with religious influence as not to be separated, renders it impossible to impugn the one, without in some measure implicating the other. In touching, there-

fore, on such an epoch, the remarks offered will of course apply generally, without regard to minute distinctions, as it would be fruitless to attempt to separate what, by an intriguing spirit and a grasping ambition, has been so closely interwoven.

Ere the period alluded to in British history, the oppressive tyranny of Rome had grown to an unprecedented height. Mankind, as if wearied with her ceaseless aggressions, and indignant at the sense of their wrongs, seemed to be seriously anticipating some glorious struggle. A stern and restless spirit of inquiry was abroad, stirring up the minds of men to assert their rights and assume their liberty by emancipating themselves from its galling fetters, even in the teeth of its sanguinary denunciations. Luther had already gone forth as a champion in the cause of truth, and many were his followers: the alarm had been sounded, the watch-word was given, and the zealous were buckling on their armour, in preparation for a spiritual campaign. The wily agents of Rome, ever on the alert, aroused by the earliest indications of a growing defection, were therefore prompt in urging every expedient to secure their waning power.

The entire subjection of Britain to papal rule, would doubtless have been regarded by the pontiff as the brightest jewel in the triple crown; to attain and confirm this ascendancy, no art nor pains was spared, no stratagem omitted, that promised success. Having been disgracefully foiled by the father, the daughter is fixed upon as the means of repairing the breach. Scarcely had the remorseless Henry been invested with the flattering title of "Defender of the Faith," than he most uncourteously repaid the fulsome adulation by trampling under foot the authority of the holy see, and annihilating every vestige of papal supremacy; hence, unhappily for Mary, she was selected as the sole probable means of healing the deadly wound which her capricious sire had inflicted.

The multiform ills and abuses that found shelter beneath the broad wing of papal sanction during the unhappy era,

emphatically termed the dark ages, were fraught with consequences to the Christian world, ever to be deplored, but never to be palliated. Nor will the consistent advocate for papacy attempt to veil or deny its past errors, when, like a moral upas of gigantic growth, it covered the breadth of the earth, wrapping the nations in gloom, and tainting the social atmosphere with death; flourishing in ignorance, and spreading its roots in error, its branches became necessarily corrupt. Mary was grafted into the evil tree, and produced its fruits unsparingly, during the brief but stormy day of her power. She who might have been a ministering angel to her people, became as a spirit that troubled the land. She had been told that the tree of life was planted in Rome—she ate of its fruit to the full, and was perverted; in ignorant security she reposed in its shade, she dreamed not that to her it would be as the shadow of death. The time that most exceeded in darkness (and of which the palpable Egyptian gloom forms a significant emblem), was doubtless that in which the light of truth was eclipsed by the iniquitous priestcraft and carnal policy of Rome, too aptly figured by her own Ætna and Vesuvius, the terrific phenomena of her soil, and appropriate types of her mischievous power—at one time obscuring the face of heaven with her fulminations, at another spreading desolation around by the overflowing streams of persecution.

While touching on the times of papal supremacy, whose iron sceptre so long weighed down the energies of the human mind, it is scarce possible to forbear pausing to contemplate the nature of her mysterious dominion, to which no parallel is to be found. That the collective reason and intellect of mankind should be led blindfold, as it were, into a voluntary captivity, embracing those fetters which were forged by a domineering and ambitious priesthood, would be incredible, were it not so well authenticated.

The period in question is one that presents to the speculative mind the most wonderful moral and political problem in the

annals of the world, and not to be solved by the application of any social principles of ordinary operation. By the deep gloom that pervades it, much is hidden from view, and of what is seen, much is distorted; but this rather serves to augment the interest awakened by the contemplation of a time so pregnant with mysterious event. From the dearth of intelligence, and its dire consequences, we learn also to appreciate the superior intellectual and religious advantages now freely enjoyed by all who are willing to seek and apply them.

At the period when papal Rome had reached the meridian of her ambitious aims and hopes, and was basking in the plenitude of her power, wealth almost boundless was poured into her lap by a thousand tributary streams, as the acknowledged head and arbitress of the Christian nations: to raise her to this pre-eminence many causes had co-operated, in addition to the many political engines she so artfully and successfully plied. The nature of the spiritual dominion she assumed, gave her an advantage, of which she too well knew how to avail herself, by grafting superstition on ignorance, and working on the religious fears of men, thus bending even the mighty to her will; while the bounty and bequests of catholic princes, the contributions of blind zeal, and the multiform exactions of an avaricious and usurping priesthood, all contributed to her temporal aggrandizement. Raised to the summit of earthly ambition, to strengthen and confirm her unwieldy dominion then became the great object of papal sway; and hence a crafty and sinister policy became needful to support her manifold usurpations. Wielding with giant grasp the double sceptre of a spiritual and a temporal dominion, the great interests of vital religion were sacrificed or basely compromised, and its sacred authority assumed for the furtherance of its ambitious designs, making it little better than an engine subservient to the inordinate lust of worldly power.

No single mind, however gifted, could grapple with so complicated a system, in which glaring and gross absurdity was often

blended with rapacious tyranny, and backed by unlimited and irresponsible power: every man was not a Luther, and he had need of all his wit to elude its vengeance; even the means of knowledge, then so rare, were mostly locked up from the world, and as it were, buried and entombed in convents and monasteries. Universal ignorance is, therefore, the only supposition that can yield a solution to the enigma: in such a soil, and no other, might superstition with impunity thus spread and flourish like the Indian banyan, multiplying itself by striking new roots even from its remotest branches; and had the evils of this corrupt system been multiplied a thousand-fold, and extended to as many generations, still the root is one, whether the original error be traced to one master-spirit of ambition or blind zeal, or to the united prejudices of arbitrary and ignorant minds acting in concert. This blindness of Rome, time made wilful; and she whose wealth, power, and dominion, were founded in darkness, became jealous of, and inaccessible to, the truth, because its light would have revealed the mystery of her iniquity, and the axe would probably have been laid at the root of her usurpations. She had therefore her Argus, ever watchful to prevent the sowing of the seed of a sound christian education, and her Briareus, every where active to eradicate and suppress the first growth of rational information, well knowing the peril of a house divided against itself, and equally conscious of the sandy foundation on which her Babel had been erected.

That so gross and arbitrary a system should so suddenly have sprung up, and so widely prevailed in a soil which had, but a few ages before, been the area of refinement, the seat of all that is high-minded and noble, appears less surprising when it is remembered that the modern Italians are not the genuine descendants of the ancient Romans. Among that spirited people, even in the days of their decline, such a system could not probably have maintained its footing, much less have acquired an undisputed and absolute ascendancy. Ere this was attempted, the moral and social aspect of Italy had been wholly

changed; the rapacious and destroying hordes of barbarians, by their continual invasions, had repeatedly ravaged the empire, exterminating the inhabitants, and extinguishing the last remains of the ancient Roman spirit. So complete was the wreck, that the language which had been current in a hundred states, ceased to be the medium of speech in any. The universal anarchy and ignorance that succeeded, naturally paved the way for despotism, producing that mixed and incongruous state of society, which yields most plentifully the needful materials for superstition to work upon. On such a foundation was erected a system, by which, for successive ages, the human mind was kept in darkness and in spiritual bondage.

In no portion of history is more strikingly exemplified the utter prostration of the human mind when besotted by ignorance, and bowed down beneath the yoke of a superstitious despotism; and hence arises a question of deep interest, as to the possibility of again reducing the mind to the like state of degradation. The light of ancient Rome was extinguished by overwhelming floods of barbarism; if the intelligent spirit of Britain be doomed at some future period to suffer an eclipse, it must be by a very different kind of invasion: the understandings of men must now be totally blinded, their collective knowledge effaced, and the means of communicating it cut off, ere their wills can be led into such a captivity. Within the range of possibility it may be, but from one quarter alone can the remotest danger be apprehended:—should a despotic power ever arise and rule in Britain; should intolerance thus gain a hateful ascendancy, controlling and crushing the freedom of the press, and suppressing Education, then indeed, in a few generations, the bulk of society might retrograde to a state of ignorance, and the great barrier being thus broken down, the persecuting fiend might once more be unchained, and bigotry might again rage with impunity.

From certain doubtful and gathering indications of a hostile kind, that have recently darkened the horizon of the religious

world, many a zealous protestant is alarmed for the fate of our reformed institutions; some even are ready to predict a coming struggle between the rival powers of popery and protestantism. The protestant cause, and that of Education (in its present enlightened form), are doubtless one—together they must stand or fall. The bare probability, therefore, of such a collision, is of too serious a nature to be passed over in silence; but though it is a question that remotely bears on Education, and may, in the opinion of some, even begin to assume a portentous aspect, the most that can be expected or attempted here is very briefly to notice a few of the leading facts, on which such apparently premature forebodings are founded.

In this nation, so long the chosen and happy seat of the reformed religion, it appears that the Roman catholics are rapidly increasing in numbers, activity, and zeal; but since it is fully conceded that the great body of catholics, strictly English, are not inferior to any class of British subjects in liberality, intelligence, and humanity, it is plain that not the flock, but the shepherds, are the grand object of alarm; some of these, it would seem, lie under the imputation of as ambitious and intolerant a spirit as their persecuting predecessors, lacking only the fitting occasion to throw off the thin disguise assumed from motives of policy. If in spiritual matters, and in times of commotion, catholics are, as it is stated, not their own masters, nor may judge for themselves, being bound to their spiritual leaders by penalties far stricter than those of any martial law, it is inferred that even the peaceable, at the will of their superiors, may be converted into a formidable engine for any political purpose; hence, that the catholics of England should gain a numerical ascendancy, might, on such grounds, be viewed with misgiving as an ominous result.

That among so very numerous a body as that of the Romish clergy, not a few should be of an intolerant character, is but the natural effect of the uncompromising doctrines which, most unhappily, that church has always sanctioned and promulgated.

If, as it has been asserted by those who profess to know, the popish creed is precisely what it ever has been, and that the unjust and arbitrary decrees for the extermination of (Christians too noble to bend, and too honest to dissimulate, miscalled) heretics, even the most bigoted and cruel edicts of the darkest ages are, up to the present time, in full force (though, for good reasons, not in actual operation), it yields seemingly a fair ground for the inference deduced, that they are tenaciously kept in store till occasion may call them forth.

Apparently does it not savour rather strongly of a double-dealing policy in the Romish dignitaries, to refuse to abrogate and abjure these obnoxious statutes and inquisitorial edicts which they themselves are so forward to disclaim? and does it not behove the protestant to be on his guard against a church of so temporising a spirit, armed with a power so unreasonable and so fatally mischievous, and whose sole pledge of amity centres in bare professions? In such a case he can only judge rationally of the future by the past, and anticipate, in the event of her exaltation, a renewal of the wanton barbarity which has so often proved the scourge of the christian world; and if matters are really thus, protestants have no sure guarantee for their peace and safety, save in their own timely precaution. Painful is the fact, that the creed and doctrine of one great body of christians should be so intolerant as to interdict any sincere or lasting amity with another and numerous body of fellow christians, followers of the same Saviour, and forming, of all christian churches, the most tolerant. Between one christian and another, though connected perhaps by the tenderest ties, a most absurd and unchristian line of separation is drawn, the effect of which can only be to perpetuate disunion and discord, by distracting religious communities, and rending in twain the christian world.

Whether, as some predict, a bitter cup is preparing for the protestant church, time will show; but should such coming events cast their shadows before, yet, as shadows are commonly

magnified, and fitted rather to scare children than to daunt the manly mind, it behoves the true christian still to hope the best. Although the present comparatively quiet aspect of things be, as some think, merely assumed, and faithless as the calm that precedes a storm, the calm may continue long, nor need we be in haste to anticipate a tempest. True it is that in Spain, and elsewhere, after a protracted seriès of the most inhuman outrages, the abhorred inquisition has been suppressed, but this is no pacific sign, but the effect of a popular movement, that iniquitous engine of cruelty having by main force been compelled to succumb to the spirit of the times. A solemn truth, alas! it is, and sealed by the blood of martyred hosts, that wherever the inquisitorial power has reared its hydra form, there social happiness has fled the troubled land, and the sacred bequest of the Redeemer to all his followers, "Peace on earth," has been sacrilegiously cancelled. But for the baneful operation of so tyrannic and hateful a spirit, how often and how happily might the great fraternity of christians have blended as one family, loving and beloved, striving only in offices of kindness, and united in one heavenly bond of lasting peace and harmony! Love is the great test of the christian character, and constitutes its perfection; it is the end of all commandments, the centre and circumference of all vital religion. Assuming such a principle, the christian carries in his own breast a light that will never mislead him, either in forming an estimate of his own character and pretensions, or in appreciating truly those of another.

In the opinions of some, perhaps, the foregoing remarks may appear to savour of undue severity; but let such pause ere they pronounce, and ascertain from history whether or not they are corroborated by facts; for as surely as the tree is discernible by the fruit it bears, so may a religion be appreciated by the effects of its operation during a lengthened course of years.

Among the nations of Europe, none perhaps have been more completely or longer subject to papal sway than Spain and

Portugal; we have therefore a right to expect in those countries a fair specimen of what that religion is able to effect, when aided by a combination of the most favourable circumstances. What then, we may inquire, has Rome done for those once flourishing countries? She found them industrious, wealthy, and happy; but to what a deplorable condition have they been reduced by the continued oppression and exactions of the Romish clergy!

Scarcely more than three centuries have elapsed when Europe boasted no country more prosperous, no people more enterprising. The ships of Spain and Portugal were to be seen in every part of the globe; and to them chiefly are we indebted for all our great discoveries. Their fleets first led the way to the distant shores of America and of India. While those of Ferdinand explored the west, those of Emmanuel discovered the then unknown regions of the eastern hemisphere, and the treasures of a new world were poured into their laps. Morally and politically, they then were a great people; and it is only from the ascendancy of Rome that we can date their decline; to the insatiable cupidity and spiritual tyranny of the popish hierarchy they owe their almost irretrievable ruin. Gradually they have sunk under the incumbent weight, until they have become the reverse of what they once were, impoverished and degraded, as nations and as men: beneath the galling yoke of papal usurpation, they have been bowed even to the dust; whereas, had they never submitted to its impositions, they might now have ranked high among the nations of the earth.

These unhappy states have indeed been surfeited with the sour grapes of Rome; from them nearly all their ancient and honourable distinction of character has now passed away; but whatever cause there may be for regret, for surprise there can be none; while apparently even her legitimate offspring, the children of her own soil, have fared no better. Modern Italy itself presents a scarcely less striking contrast to what might be expected as the proper fruit of advantages (professedly, so

far superior to what any other nation could boast) which for so many centuries they have enjoyed; but though so long the seat of refinement, and quaffing at the fountain-head those vital and purifying streams that no other church or government might presume to bestow,—of such lofty pretensions, what has been the result? But lest digression should overstep its limits, it will be proper to resume the thread of British history, leaving the dark and troublesome though short reign of Mary, and entering upon the more pleasing contemplation of a better era, commencing with Elizabeth, her sister and her rival.

Elizabeth had the advantage of an education suitable to a princess who was destined to reign over a free and intelligent people: her temporary seclusion favoured the habit of reflection, and doubtless tended to mature the energies of her mind; hence that vigour and decision of character which she brought to the throne, and which ever after marked the splendid career of the virgin queen. Her authority was sustained by her personal merit; her courage and constancy so far surpassing the standard of her sex, constrained an obedience founded on the sincerest respect; and her principles were firmly fixed on the solid basis of religion, while her primary motive was ever the same—the prosperity and happiness of her people.

The name of this princess stands high in the national annals; and her vigorous policy, with its happy results, seem to give her a just claim to the admiration and gratitude of posterity. Her character has, however, been variously depicted: by her friends, and such as favour her policy, her memory has been crowned with the warmest eulogiums; while, by the enemies of her political principles and her creed, opprobrium has been heaped on her name; and of late it seems to have become fashionable to criticise her conduct with undue severity, and without a fair allowance for times and circumstances: hence, to the least popular features of her rule the worst motives have been attached; but when her sex is considered, the suddenness of her elevation, the almost unlimited extent of her power,

the narrow bigotry of the times, and the hostility she had to encounter, her steady patriotism, and the strength of principle by which she surmounted all opposition; when all these are duly weighed, those who will not leave her fair fame unsullied, will at least give her credit for upright intentions, notwithstanding a few eccentricities and weaknesses. To the gratitude of Englishmen she has a powerful claim, nor does it well consist with their known character to join with her adversaries in aspersing her memory, especially when in the list of her admiring panegyrists we find the names of some, not only of the first merit and distinction, but who, from personal knowledge and long observation, possessed ampler means of forming a true estimate of her character than any modern biographer can possibly pretend to.

The helm of authority was consigned to Elizabeth during the swellings of the storm, and she was aware of the peril of her situation; her skilful guidance was to counteract the threatening gloom that veiled the horizon of her hopes. Young, yet seemingly equal to the task, she stood with the serenity and confidence of virtue, still looking upwards with the animated eye of faith, and the prayer of integrity prevailed; light sprang up in the darkness, and the raging of the tempest gradually subsided, the restless waves of political tumult were hushed, and the sun of the reformation "arose with healing in its wings;" the clouds of superstition were dispersed by the winds of heaven, which favoured her prosperous course as she triumphantly steered her kingdom into the secure and delightful haven of peace and truth.

It was the happy talent of this princess, not only to discern and reward merit, but also to render it subservient to the general good, by assigning to it its congenial sphere of action: with an even hand she preserved the balance of the state; and neither individual influence, popular currents of opinion, nor specious party zeal, nor even that strong sense of prerogative (which, if a foible, was in her a harmless one), of which she

appeared at times so tenacious, were ever licensed to disturb its equilibrium, which was, perhaps, the better confirmed by the weight of opposing interests, subjected to a judicious control. Thus she became the faithful guardian of the constitution, seeking the truest interests of her people, and judiciously employing her uncommon power to give them a durable character. Perfection is not a sublunary attribute; but when the unusual length of her administration is considered, how little do we find to censure, how much to applaud!

The birth, education, and spirit of Elizabeth, were all English, and few British hearts will withhold a tribute of gratitude to the memory of a princess who was the great champion of our faith, and the chosen instrument of Providence in accomplishing his gracious designs. Had this order of things been reversed by the unseen hand that weaves the destinies of princes and of empires; had the shorter reign been assigned to Elizabeth, and the succeeding long reign to Mary, what must have been the consequences to England? Humanity shudders, as with trembling hand she draws back the veil; contemplation is baffled, and forbears the vain attempt to pourtray a scene, to the delineation of which the darkest lines of imagination are perhaps inadequate. How many copious springs of national honour and advantage, whose currents, augmented by succeeding ages, have flowed down to us, would have been dried up in their source, or diverted from their proper channels! Many of the blessings we prize and cherish as a free people, sprang up and flourished beneath the fostering hand of Elizabeth; but had Britain then been suffered to plunge headlong into the abyss of error, with the millstone of papal domination about her neck, nothing short of a miracle could apparently have arrested her downward progress, or have averted the nation's final ruin.

In taking a retrospect of those eventful times, how does the heart of the patriotic christian burn within him as he sees "the counsel of the froward carried headlong!" To the crafty

decrees of Ahithophel the seals of folly were plainly affixed; and to the eye of faith "the arm of the Lord was openly revealed." With mingled emotions of pious gratitude and honest triumph, the contemplative christian traces the operation of a Divine hand throughout, and beholds the attributes of truth, power, and goodness, inscribed in characters of light, which he that runs may read. The zeal, fidelity, and heroism of the noble band of martyrs, ascended in bright phalanx before the throne of Jehovah, and the breath of praise and triumph, from the lips of dying saints, was wafted to heaven as an offering of sweet incense, acceptable to the Most High. The powerful appeal prevailed, and by terrible things in righteousness was it answered; a regenerating spirit, and mighty to save, was sent forth: like the pillar of old did it guide the faithful, and was to them as a wall of defence; but as a fire troubling the host of their enemies: safely did it lead them through the sea of affliction; but to their persecutors was as a destroying whirlwind, and as the sea returning in its strength, and overwhelming them with a mighty reaction; their chariot-wheels were taken off—the despisers beheld, and wondered, and perished; and a shout of the faithful was heard, saying, How are the mighty fallen!

Among the greatest and wisest of earthly potentates, it must be conceded that some have been, in one sense, comparatively uneducated; and in the early ages many have been wholly so. The education of the Saxon prince Alfred, justly surnamed the Great, seems to have been much neglected; and similar instances might easily be multiplied. Should we revert even to the time of the ancient Hebrew dynasty, the same fact is illustrated in the character of David, who in the more striking kingly requisites surpassed those who preceded and followed him; but it cannot be supposed that his distinguishing qualities were derived from any formal code of instruction. From the early history of almost every nation the like examples may be adduced, wherein the human mind seems to have attained,

comparatively speaking, to the summit of greatness without the aid of any artificial system of education. But the admission of this, to its full extent, by no means affects the arguments in favour of Education; for it should be weighed, that such cases apply to times of greater simplicity, and that the want of Education has commonly been, in such instances, more than counterbalanced by the stern but salutary discipline of adversity, and by that true practical wisdom which is ever best acquired in the school of experience; when native strength of mind is joined to natural goodness of heart, it will need no better culture, neither will it attain to equal perfection by means of any artificial system, without some such discipline.

It should also be borne in mind, that although in times of greater simplicity characters of the greatest merit are to be found, yet in point of numbers, at least, they bear no comparison with those of more enlightened ages; they rather form striking exceptions to their times, as having been gifted by nature with a rare and seemingly intuitive excellence, for the purpose of furthering the benevolent designs of Heaven. Meteor like, they contrast beautifully with the surrounding darkness, but may not compare with the general spread of worth and talent which, like the sun-light, is diffused to all, and which Education is the legitimate, proper, and only probable means of securing.

No extraordinary degree of penetration is requisite to enable the student of history to detect many of those fatal springs, whence have arisen the frequent miscarriages of princes, and the consequent train of calamities in which their dominions have been involved. Often will they be found to have originated in a characteristic want of self-government, combined with an inordinate lust of dominion; if therefore the great desideratum be the happiness of the millions, whose destiny has been confided to the will of one, and controlled at the arbitrary pleasure of the individual, we may safely conclude that to be the most eligible feature in princely tuition which

strikes at the root of those dangerous and besetting foibles of kingly minds. The errors of the ruler, and the oppression of the governed, are equally the fruit of an inordinate ambition; nor perhaps will any human means avail to check its growth, where its root has been once allowed to strike. Early, if effectually, must it be counteracted, by rectifying the judgment, by imparting sober and rational views of life, and of the social ends of civil government, and by rendering sacred the bond of mutual obligation, by which the various classes of mankind are indissolubly connected. To give their due ascendancy to justice, humanity, and habits of temperance, in the princely character, is more effectually to serve the cause of virtue and happiness, than a thousand Howards or a host of philanthropists can effect in a private sphere. Nor is it, perhaps, too much to affirm, in praise of such training, that even among the arch-destroyers of old, had they been so disciplined, many might, and doubtless would, have ranked with the chief benefactors of the human race.

Temperance is the proper and most needful adjunct of power, and should ever go hand in hand with knowledge, in order to render it available; for as no virtue, unless sustained by the former, can be truly estimable, so without the latter it cannot be fully effectual. Temperance imparts strength and beauty to every nobler quality; not without good reason, therefore, the ancient Persians laid so great a stress on it in the education of their youth; nor probably can a finer illustration of its power be adduced than in the amiable character of Cyrus, which may well contrast with that of Alexander, who certainly has been celebrated no less for his mental endowments, than for heroism and the extraordinary success of his arms. Whatever may have been the intellectual attainments of the Persian prince, the ascendancy of this single virtue sufficed to cast an undying lustre on his name, which may justly rank with the most honourable in those times.

This essential and all-important, though noiseless virtue of

self-control, by which Cyrus was so happily distinguished, was probably the only one in which Alexander was fatally defective; in other respects his acquirements were apparently superior. But supposing the character of this hero, with this exception, to have comprised every possible perfection, yet in consequence of this one defect of intemperance, do we see all his shining and noble qualities eclipsed and neutralized; for it is most evident, that for want of this one qualification, humble as it is, he stumbled and fell in the midst of his majestic and proud career; whereas Cyrus, by the timely aid of this most requisite talent, held on his course to the end with uniform honour and rectitude. It has been seen what temperance did for Sparta; and should we, by descending to later times, enlarge the sphere of our observation, we should witness a similar and sure correspondence between the cause and its effect.

Among modern European nations, Switzerland, which by its geographical position (excluding it from the advantages of commercial intercourse), seems doomed to the perpetual inheritance of comparative poverty, has, notwithstanding, derived from its characteristic simplicity, which is the proper soil of the temperate virtues, the most solid benefits; hence they have maintained their liberty entire, while more refined and flourishing states have alternately succumbed to the galling yoke of successful ambition. The once flourishing Venetian territory, with its superabundance of wealth and power, sustained by unrivalled commercial advantages, was unable to preserve its liberty entire, not because the wealth and refinement of the Venetians were necessarily hostile to the maintenance of their freedom (these, aided by their intelligence, might have strengthened the cause of liberty, and for a long season did so) but because voluntarily betrayed by their superfluity into the vices of intemperance, a fatal and inextinguishable spirit of factious rivalry was generated even in the heart of their public councils. The zealous theologian might probably suggest a weightier reason, in the remarkable difference between

the religious characters of the two republics—that of the Swiss being serious, sound, and practical, while that of their southern and more assuming neighbours comprised an abundance of idle and ostentatious ceremonies, blended with little of the pure and vital spirit of true Christianity.

But, notwithstanding all that has been or that might be advanced in praise of temperance, how highly and justly soever it may be extolled, it is yet to be regarded rather as the nurse of all the virtues, and essential to the perfection of each, than as a detached and single excellence; it can therefore never supersede or rank above that needful knowledge, for the want of which there is no earthly equivalent. The temperate virtues constituted the strength and sinews of Rome; but superior wisdom and science were its sceptre and glory. Spartan valour was the sword of Greece; but Athenian philosophy was its crown.

Knowledge has been aptly termed power: every degree of intelligence advances its possessor in the scale of rational being; but to render it subservient to the best interests of mankind, it must be perpetually subject to the dominion of virtue, and to the guidance of wisdom. Experience tells us, that without such a controlling principle, mere human knowledge is apt to run wild; for wisdom and knowledge are not one, neither are virtue and knowledge synonymous, although there be a strongly implied connexion between them. Human wit has of late been exhausted in eulogiums on what is significantly termed "the march of mind," the triumphs of intellect, &c., with many a splendid apophthegm of similar import, and the "ne plus ultra" of complimentary language has been lavished as incense at the shrine of human self-sufficiency. Many of these fine sayings would no doubt be quite appropriate were they quite intelligible, and did they yield a clear and definable idea, or applied solely to abstract knowledge in its perfect state, divested of those clogs and impediments with which it is burdened, and which, unluckily for the pride of mortals, are

neither few nor trivial, being inevitably blended with error, and sometimes fraught with mischief. Nor can we in this imperfect state expect to find it in the human mind without that alloy of passion, doubt, or prejudice, which has its existence in the erring judgment and frail constitution of man.

So comprehensive in its nature is knowledge, and so diversified are its forms, that no single definition can convey to the mind an adequate idea of its essential quality and operation. There is an actual knowledge resting on conviction, and an habitual knowledge depending on the memory; there is a mathematical, a philosophical, and an historical knowledge: the first determines the relative proportions of number, figure, and extent; the province of the second is to search out the reasons of things; and the third and last applies to known facts, and collects its wisdom from the records of the past. There are degrees of knowledge that may so influence our opinion, as even to demand our faith without amounting to positive conviction. There is self-knowledge—a leading essential in true wisdom—a knowledge of relative obligations; and another knowledge of duty, in its fullest sense, comprising within its ample circle every Divine and human obligation. What is termed experience, is, probably, of all knowledge the most useful, revealing what reason alone cannot teach, and imparting that wisdom which is available for all purposes, applicable to all times, and within the reach of every social being. Experimental or inventive knowledge, resulting from mental activity, also differs widely from the sedate and passive, implying the intellectual acquisitions that have been stored up in the mind.

Thus complicated in its nature is knowledge: the mere term therefore, in common acceptation, implies no more than that general spread of information, which is the result of progressive improvement, and of increased facilities for the communication of whatever is essential to the well-being of society; in this sense, indeed, it seems almost to merit the warmest eulogiums that

have been lavished upon it. There is, however, a knowledge of a transcendantly higher order, and of a Divine character, and to which belongs the exclusive power of rendering the mind of man, on worthy and befitting occasions, superior to terrestrial motives and to the accidents of time, by directing its aspirations to things of an enduring and celestial nature; and to such knowledge alone does unqualified estimation pertain; for all else that bears the name being but comparatively good, and falling short of a perfect standard, can advance no just claim to unqualified eulogy.

The sublimest objects of creation—all that is great and grand—that is fair and goodly in nature—have been called in to aid analogy, in order to impress the mind with adequate conceptions of the benefits of knowledge, and the high degree of estimation due to it by civilized man: it is called intellectual food, and mental light; it is likened to the glorious luminary of day, and to a tree of life, whose fruits are divine; yet, should the flattering simile be pursued, it might carry the sanguine panegyrist far beyond his original design; for all human knowledge being derived, may with more truth be compared to the borrowed light of the lunar orb, whose brightest radiance is but a reflection. Nor may it be affirmed even of the solar influence, that it is invariably beneficial; for the sunbeam that matures the generous grape, the various fruits, the grain, and healthful plant, multiplies also the baneful weed, and taints the atmosphere with pestilence and death. The ray that illumes the path of "charity, intent on gentle deeds," and guides the steps of philanthropy in its "labour of love," also throws its radiance around the tiger's lair, and lights the monarch of the forest to his den, points the ravenous wolf to his unoffending prey, gives animation to the venomous serpent tribes, and multiplies the noxious reptiles of the desert.

Well had it been for the world if, in this its forbidding extreme, the parallel did not hold equally true with its more grateful converse: the application is, however, too evident to be

mistaken, in its reference to the eccentric and wayward agency of that knowledge which, by ministering to private interests and prejudices, is subject to endless perversion. It is a high and flowing fountain, but its head is divided, sending forth diverse currents, and the bitter are oft mingled with the sweet; even its more salutary streams become infected by the corrupted channels through which they flow, and tainted by the poisonous weeds of error which border their courses. For as there is a knowledge whose province is to exalt and to bless—a Divine philosophy, whose heavenward flight is second only to the "wisdom from above," and whose dictates are as the oracles of truth: so is there a counterfeit and worldly craft, that vainly arrogates to itself the name—a short-sighted spirit, moving within its own narrow circle of cunning—a slave to evil passions and designs—even kindling its unhallowed taper at the altar of infidelity, and endeavouring to extinguish the sacred light of Christianity by the corrupt agency of an apostatizing and delusive spirit.

It is curious, and somewhat amusing, to observe the contradictory opinions that have obtained, among the most knowing of men, on this inexhaustible theme, which has had the opposite extremes of estimation alternately awarded to it. There being no settled standard by which human knowledge can be appreciated, in the vague use of the term, every one seems determined to avail himself of the liberty, and exalts or vilifies it in compliance with his humour or turn of thinking. While some have professed to regard every thing in the shape of human erudition with unqualified contempt, as a mere shadow, as pompous indeed, but wanting substance,—or as a kind of ignis fatuus, misguiding the too credulous traveller into bogs and quagmires; there are others who affect an homage little short of idolatry, exalting their divinity to the spheres, and ranking her among the celestial powers: by these she is extolled as the supreme earthly good; by those she is loaded with opprobrium, as the arch-betrayer of man's reason, and the subverter

of his innocence; as a wandering star of malign aspect, rather than as a heavenly orb of uniform course, and of benign influence. But though human knowledge may at times, and often has, resembled the sudden meteor, that dazzles, surprises, and disappears for ever, yet must we own that her origin is Divine; under whatever form she appear, she is still a luminary; for that which emits not light, is not knowledge, however it may be designated.

In its primary sense, knowledge may well be termed power; for without it, virtue itself is both lame and blind: in its secondary sense it is also power; but being limited to secular objects and second causes, its utility becomes the sole criterion of its estimation; for though it be the avowed and proper instrument of good, yet is it equally available for every mischievous purpose.

To the statesman, political knowledge is power, and subserves all his designs equally, whether tending to the public weal or disadvantage. The profound knowledge of jurisprudence, which constitutes the able lawyer, becomes in his hand an instrument of power; but how often has it been perverted, and made subservient to the most fraudulent designs! To the merchant, commercial knowledge is power; and theological learning is to the divine that goodly talent which blends the eloquence of truth with the animation of zeal, adding the force of conviction to the graces of language: yet, how oft has polemic skill in theology been prostituted as the weapon and shield of apostacy; and that Divine science whose is the prerogative and the power to purify the heart, and exalt its affections to heavenly things, been perverted by the utter prostration of truth, plucking her from her eternal sphere, and arraying her sacred form in the loathsome garb of imposture!

Thus potent is knowledge to work its effect, whether its agency be that of a ministering angel, or a spirit of darkness; whether exalted as an intellectual divinity, or degraded as the slave of iniquity: and of every avocation and profession it

may equally be affirmed, that to every man, in his peculiar calling, knowledge is power, for if it includes not perfection in the chosen pursuit, it implies that excellence which is progressing towards it.

A suggestion here naturally arises in the mind, springing from a conviction of the weakness and limited operation of the human intellect, forbidding us to expect the union of many excellences in the same mind. Nor does it excite our surprise to find them so rarely allied; we rather take it for granted that perfection in any one engrossing pursuit must have been purchased at the partial, and in some cases the total, exclusion of other acquisitions. Distinguished and varied excellence, combined, lie but rarely within the compass of any single mind, and he must possess extraordinary talent and mental energy, who, in quest of general information, proposes to himself perfection even in the different branches of useful science; for although eminence in one kind of knowledge by no means implies ignorance of another, yet the undivided attention which excellence demands, opposes an obstacle to the free admission of other studies requiring mental abstraction, which few minds are sufficiently comprehensive to surmount. The student of medicine, of the mathematics, or of languages, may each, by exclusive attention, ensure a steady progress towards pre-eminence; and by a sedulous improvement of talent, the artist and the musician may arrive at that point of perfection which fits them to shine with distinction, each in his professional sphere; but rarely are transcendant acquirements attainable through any medium, save of continued perseverance; and there can be little doubt, that were the most celebrated professors of the day constrained to exchange avocations for a short time, the metamorphosis would be sufficiently perplexing to all parties.

That men of superior understanding should so often select for disputation those subjects on which they are comparatively uninformed, in preference to those on which extensive infor-

mation has qualified them to decide, is rather a cause for regret than surprise. Superior knowledge and judgment on any contested point is too apt to generate that pride of intellect which presumes to determine with equal confidence on other matters, even when little conversant with them. Such, probably, is the knowledge alluded to by St. Paul, as that which "puffeth up;" and to this same egotistic pride of understanding may probably be attributed those great errors into which even the best-intentioned have sometimes fallen; to thousands of an opposite stamp it has often proved a seducing spirit, leading them through successive stages of impiety, from presumption to profligacy, from pride of intellect to the daring extremes of a reckless profanity; while to multitudes of a less violent, but not less unstable character, it has proved the rock on which they have made shipwreck alike of their reason and their hope. Thus viewed, knowledge may be likened to Nebuchadnezzar's visionary tree, whose branches spread wide, and whose top reached to heaven, but whose roots sank deep into the earth; and in which was food for all, for the evil and the good; and wherein not only every clean fowl, but every unclean beast also, found shelter and lodging: or it might be compared to the mystical antediluvian plant which graced the centre of the blissful garden, whose inspiring fruit was pregnant with supernal virtue, till rashly plucked and polluted by the hand of disobedience, whose unhallowed touch infused a mysterious venom, that changed the coveted blessing into a curse.

Even now is there a knowledge in the world, whose anti-christian fruit is of the like deadly nature—a too current spirit of apostacy writing bitter things against that goodly faith which has been the rock of ages, and the sure and tried hold of the christian's hope; undermining to its very foundation that truly catholic church, of which all protestants are members; a faith that has received the homage of the wisest and best of mankind, and of which the national church of England forms so grand and venerable a feature;—a church which (whatever

abuses may have crept into it) has ever been a sure sanctuary and bulwark for the truth, and a shadow from the heat of persecution, the generous advocate of universal toleration, and receiving under its protecting wing all the true members of Christ, and which has been the common parent and protectress of protestants of every denomination.

Allied to such a spirit is that superficial and inflated knowledge which presumes to challenge the authority of the Jewish lawgiver, because the notions of astronomy imbibed by him in Egypt were conformable to the popular prejudices of the times (that sublime science being then in its infancy), as if he was thereby disqualified as a fit instrument in the providential dispensations of Jehovah, or rendered unfit to be the judge and leader of the posterity of the faithful Abraham. Omitting to discriminate with candour and judgment, they seem not to be aware that in no instance does revelation interfere with men's opinions in questions of science: it has nothing to do with it, having avowedly and uniformly one object in view—the perfection and happiness of mankind. In matters of secondary and secular import, mankind have been left wholly free to exercise their own ingenuity and speculations.

St. Paul was equally under the influence of the Divine Spirit, and as eminently gifted as any among the primitive christians; in his public ministry, therefore, we, as christians, are led to believe that he was under the immediate guidance of the same Holy Power; yet this sacred influence did not quit the sphere of its dignity by descending to trivial things, or Paul would not have forgotten his cloak and parchments which he left at Troas, and was obliged to send for: in the common transactions of life he was doubtless left to himself, and therefore liable to the same mistakes as other men. It is by such sinister attacks, and by absurdly confounding the inspired parts of the sacred oracles with the mere human narratives of minor import connected with them, and attaching the same characteristic importance to both, that the most unjust and illiberal

conclusions have been deduced; and on this its apparently weak side, when misunderstood or misrepresented, Divine revelation has ever had to combat the most injurious aspersions of malignity.

As the desire and rational pursuit of knowledge is honourable in itself, so the pleasure it affords is of the noblest kind, weaning the mind from less worthy objects and meaner gratifications, and fixing its desires on things of highest and permanent worth; and hence the Divine principle in man gathers renewed strength, and rises to its proper level of dignity. The moral tendencies of science depend indeed on its application, but when rationally directed, knowledge adds stability to virtue, and true greatness to character. For the honour of literature, history can show her thousands, and biography her ten thousands, who, by the sole energy and splendour of talent thus elicited, have emerged from obscurity into merited distinction; and with whatever degree of admiration such examples may be regarded, they are no more than the proper fruits of judicious mental culture; and though rare, the rational inference is, that their rarity is owing to some fault or omission of education, unless it be imputed to a defective structure of the mind, which is wholly an unwarrantable conclusion.

Although a superficial information on weighty subjects is commonly allied to error, yet as every acquisition is a progresssive advance towards perfect knowledge, in no stage or degree does it lie open to censure; for if the stability of virtue depend on the right exercise of the judgment, on habits of thought, and on the strength of the reasoning faculty, all these are brought into action in the attainment of knowledge, and indeed are the very terms and sole condition on which knowledge, properly so called, is to be acquired. It must, however, be conceded, that the mind may be so intently fixed on speculative knowledge, as wholly to abstract the needful attention from those every-day duties and home concerns, whose claims are ever imperative and indispensable; by so indirect a bias

the moral equilibrium is also disturbed, and consequent disorder introduced into the mind.

Progressive knowledge, though it does not constitute progressive virtue, is yet one of the leading forms of wisdom, and essential to its growth and perfection; and though it be not indispensable to individual happiness, yet collectively, neither happiness nor perfection could subsist without it. By many have the benefits of knowledge been questioned; nor are those wanting by whom all systematic education is lightly esteemed; but even such might have better appreciated it, had they looked with an eye of closer scrutiny into those times that have been destitute of its needful agency and training, wherein we see the human character alternately assuming each absurd extreme, and every form of inconsistency springing, as it were, spontaneously from the mixed and wild growth of blended vice and virtue. The untutored mind being subject to the perpetual illusion of specious appearances, becomes the willing slave of irregular impulse, and the senseless dupe of every fallacious impression.

Whatever merit the writers of ancient history possessed, they are not always distinguished for the accuracy of their details. In the annals of the primitive nations we often detect a mysterious tissue of truth and falsehood, imposing on the credulous judgment by an illusion which, for want of a clue to guide her through the labyrinth of conjecture, reason herself is oft unable to dispel. On the history of some there rests a cloud of impervious darkness; while that of others is so blended with fiction, and so obscured by fables and legends, that the acutest penetration is at a stand, and we are constrained to receive with doubt and hesitation, nay, even with contempt, the exaggerated narrative as an egotistic effusion of the too partial or strangely credulous historian, rather than as a fair and honest sample of the character and intelligence of the times they relate to. Imposing examples are held up for admiration and applause, while the true picture of human

nature, in such of its circumstances and details as are best calculated to excite a rational interest, from the comparative simplicity of the times, is often withheld from our view. Even among the better attested records of later times, of which we have a nearer and a clearer view, we are often in danger of an erroneous bias; when all that is patriotic, noble, and striking, is displayed with the partial zeal of a national vanity, and the humiliating reverse, if not omitted, is disguised and partially suppressed; so that a true estimate of the human character in its various relative positions and progressive stages of improvement, too commonly eludes our historical research—those who figure most in its pages being not only exceptions to the great bulk of their species and of their contemporaries, but have probably soared above themselves in those splendid traits which had been called forth by some sudden emergency, and subsequently have subsided to the level of insignificance.

In taking historical views, therefore, it is well to use the author's perspective, and look as narrowly as possible through the medium of his prepossessions. Rarely is an author willing to exhibit a portrait whose homely features might seem degrading to human nature, revolting to the cultivated taste of his reader, and offensive to the national prepossessions of his countrymen, and it may be added, by no means gratifying to the writer, whose vanity is often a party concerned; but all such omissions are a hiding of truth, and of that steady light by which alone we can appreciate rightly the character of man, and the actual state of society, intellectual and moral, in their different grades and eras.

Such a plain map of man in each successive age would be invaluable, as a standard by which remote times and nations might be brought together and compared, the progress of knowledge in connexion with moral advancement ascertained, and the collective character of mankind, from the earliest to the present time, determined. Here, then, is a void which every man's judgment must fill—a moral blank which reason

and experience must supply; these are always at least safe guides, and invariably will they be found to repeat the same truth—that to abstract knowledge from the social world, would be like extinguishing the sun in the natural system, without whose needful influence the unbridled elements would speedily return to their primitive chaos and confusion.

Ages there have been whose widely-pervading gloom has been scarcely broken by a single ray of intellectual light; some on which a veil of thickest darkness seems to have rested, pierced at intervals by the beams of a few bright scattered lights, apparently struggling with the surrounding obscurity. The number and splendour of these luminaries have increased with the course of time, successively rising and setting, like intellectual stars, reciprocally communicating and reflecting their benignant influence, keeping up a kind of mental twilight, emanating from minds rarely gifted by nature, and improved by self-culture, supplying the want of systematic instruction. Without these intervening lights the intellectual atmosphere would have thickened to Egyptian gloom, and the moral world would have degenerated to a chaotic anarchy. Happily knowledge increased, bringing an accession of light, though often questionable in its nature and of doubtful influence, like the pale and clouded light of the waning moon, by whose partial rays the benighted traveller is beguiled, and thus has the seeker for truth been led to wander among the dark mountains of error, or entangled amid the sophistical mazes of a specious philosophy, into which his unwary steps have been betrayed.

To this long intellectual night succeeded the gradually increasing dawn of intelligence, diffusing its bright and steady influence around the horizon of the rapidly civilizing world. To the nations of modern Europe has the day-spring of knowledge arisen with solar strength and radiance, extending its quickening irradiations to the ends of the earth. The brightness of its future revelations are hidden from human research; nor is it given to human speculation to compute its

meridian altitude and splendour; nor may created intellect conceive the wondrous births that shall arise and ripen in its solar strength, when at some future and perhaps far distant age, it shall have reached the zenith of its power (if to its progress a period be appointed); but already may reason discover beneath the partial raising of the veil, some distinct traces of those excellences which are destined "to shine more and more unto the perfect day;" already we behold the indelible impress of those perfections which invest the mind of man with a superhuman character and dignity, superior and foreign to the fading and fluctuating things of time and sense. The greatness of its conceptions, the vigour and variety of its operations, its lofty aspirations, and insatiable thirst for higher attainments, are so many Divine features that bespeak the worth and dignity of the mind, the bright and heavenly indications of its glorious destination.

True it is, that in this great nursery of souls, the fading flowers of fiction are profusely blended with the better fruits of knowledge; but in all that surrounds us we discern the hand of cultivation, and the fertility of the soil; and although the cynic may with seeming reason rail thereat, yet must even the cynic confess that such a prospect is preferable to the savage wild, and that the richly covered heights of science, though intersected with the weedy and wild growths of folly, are far more grateful to the philosophic eye, than the blank uncheering wastes of ignorance, presenting nothing that is "pleasant to the sight, or good for food," nothing either to admire or to applaud. The present age is as if the powers of the human mind, which had been comparatively slumbering for centuries, were roused with collective energy, "as a giant in his strength," bearing down all the barriers which prejudice and long custom had interposed, exploring the hidden wonders of science and the mysteries of nature, and making all subservient to its own vast and magnificent designs. It were as easy to stay the rapid wheels of the Creator, and bid Him lay

aside the golden compasses, as to circumscribe the intellectual powers of man, and say, No farther shall ye come.

If talents are brightened by use, there is little cause to fear that many are now in danger of contracting rust for want of it: to bury the talent is certainly not the order of the day; every man who has one seems to have made a vow to keep it in perpetual motion, and to have pronounced upon it the doom of Macbeth that "it shall sleep no more;" and this may be right, for thus the talents of each become available for all. The overflowings of intellect may need restraint, its wild growths may need pruning, and much that is current may be counterfeit, yet there is no lack of what is sterling, nor is aught that is useful or pleasurable in art or in science neglected.

It is rather the froward petulance of a child than the reason of a man to cavil at what is in its nature good, from a suspicion of the partial evil that may result from its abuse. Knowledge, as the true and proper corrective of error, strikes at the main root of evil, though in common with all that is called good it lies open to perversion by malice and guilt. Ignorance is to knowledge as decrepitude to health and vigour, as the impotency of childhood in leading strings to the free and healthful use of the limbs and faculties in manhood.

Let him who questions whether the increase of knowledge tends to the promotion of virtue and happiness, contemplate the splendid and triumphant career of science in the present distinguished era, with its countless train of happy effects,—ministering to the hourly wants and accommodations of civilized man, and daily adding to his list of comforts, ever forming new channels of industry by which the superabundance of wealth is carried off, and turned to the most profitable uses; and let him contrast this animating picture with the cheerless prospect presented by the annals of many a remote and benighted period. But it may perhaps be doubted by some whether the unlimited diffusion of knowledge may not ultimately be productive of unforeseen and perhaps irremediable

mischiefs, from the combination of mental power with the stimulus of irregular motives and passions; but were it not wiser and even safer to deduce more certain conclusions from reasoning founded on fact, than to indulge apprehensions which, if not wholly fictitious, have little better foundation than the uncertain fluctuation of speculative opinions?

In the pages of ancient history there intervenes many a blank, many a moral void, barren of incident and instruction, many a long and eventful period also of which scarcely any thing can now with certainty be known; and should we call reason and analogy to our aid, they will but very defectively supply the omission, but the current annals of every nation, notwithstanding, present many a field in which evidence may be richly gleaned by a diligent hand. In the blank and unillumined periods that intervene between these striking epochs which serve as the moral landmarks of antiquity, reason and experience judiciously combined may in part supply the absence of conviction resting on facts, and though they can but darkly reveal what is obscured by the lapse of ages, they may by analogy substitute at least the forms of truth for the shadows of uncertainty. Though the historian may be mute, reason is ever eloquent; she tells us in no ambiguous terms that those tempestuous eras of barbaric ignorance were necessarily subjected to the iron sway of a blind and cruel despotism. She tells us that times of darkness and confusion are necessarily pregnant with all the complicated vice and wretchedness that the disordered passions of a savage nature can engender. In such benighted and besotted eras it was that anarchy spread the reign of terror and injustice in their most oppressive forms. Then it is that crime attains to a gigantic growth, assuming every shape that is appalling to nature and disgraceful to humanity. In the security of concealment and disguise, guilt rears his crimson and shameless front with tenfold impunity amid the surrounding corruption; and when leagued with power, assumes its most aggressive forms and

deadliest weapons, destructive alike to peace and virtue, and mocking the Majesty of heaven with reiterated provocations.

Could the suppressed and hidden portions of history be brought to light, and faithfully depicted, they would present a picture, true perhaps to nature, but by no means flattering to human vanity. Concealment ever challenges suspicion, and from what is known, much that is suppressed may be inferred—many a blank in the earlier records even of our own favoured isle may thus partially be filled, and the veil that covers many an eventful period in some degree removed; but were it possible to obtain a clear and comprehensive view of all that transpired during those eras of confusion and civil commotion that have at times convulsed the land, how would it cast into the shade those fancied virtues, which by many are supposed to belong almost exclusively to the ages of primeval simplicity! What a revolution would such a view create in many a mind unduly prejudiced, and as fond to eulogize the past as to decry the present!

Happily many a generation has arisen and passed away since Britain was rent by those brutal and sanguinary factions, which, like the monsters of the desert, so oft infused their deadly venom into the heart of domestic peace, destroying the healthful current of the social system. Such times there have doubtless been, when Britain in her turn has drained the cup of trembling to the very dregs; times wherein ignorance, error, and violence have divided the land between them, confounding every vestige of moral order, and neutralizing its vital and physical energies; times of feudal anarchy, when licensed and lawless oppression alternately devoured the land; times when education was at its lowest ebb, and wherein the collective intelligence and morality of the people were such as might naturally be expected, wherever its genial influence is wholly unknown.

On the one hand, we contemplate the face of the country in many parts overspread with pathless forests, and entire counties

scarcely intersected with cross-roads, the woods affording shelter and concealment to numerous hordes of banditti, composed of men of desperate fortunes and dissolute characters, whose number and boldness were augmented by the confusion of the times; many who, having been stripped themselves, and reduced by violence to beggary, retaliated, and in turn became the plunderers of others; many who, having neither the means nor the hope of obtaining an honest subsistence, were ready enough to plead necessity as an excuse for increasing the bands of spoilers.

Of the villany and inhumanity perpetrated in secrecy in those strong-holds of brutality, scarcely a memorial remains; and reason can but draw a faint outline of the wanton injustice and cruelty that must by habit have become familiar to the ruffian actors in these dens of infamy. To augment the evil, the complicated wrongs that such a state of insubordination gave rise to were without remedy or redress. Who might explore the forest bandit's secret haunt, or who disclose its nightly horrors? Could spies have been found for so dangerous a service, how were they to elude discovery? and should they succeed and escape, where were the couriers to spread the intelligence? How should their safety be guaranteed, when direct communication was impracticable, and when the few rude cross-ways were even more dangerous than the pathless woods? And supposing the possibility of surmounting such formidable obstacles, where were the daily journals to record? or who should transmit the information, when printing was unknown, and when it was a rare accomplishment to write? But this view, dark and revolting as it is, comprises but a part of the horrors that reigned in those days of feudal anarchy: to complete the picture we must turn and behold the nation groaning under the yoke of a worse, because licensed form of oppression and outrage, and cruelly fettered by the chains of an authorised system of tyranny.

Of the feudal barons, whose proud castles were reared in every part of the island, by far the greater proportion were rapacious tyrants, exercising a petty sovereignty, and extending their despotic rule over the surrounding country, bent on self-aggrandizement, and increasing their power by all available means, whether fair or unfair, giving loose alternately to the wilful and malignant passions which their pride, avarice, rivalry, or revenge, suggested; whose vassals and adherents, acknowledging no higher law than the will of him to whom their necessities had bound them, were the ready slaves and tools of those designs, in which also their own interests were involved, as sharers in the success or disgrace of their haughty chieftains. None save the guilty and wily confidant had power to reveal the intrigues of lordly despotism; for who might dare to pierce the towers, the strong and dreary keeps, and vaulted recesses, which formed so prominent a feature in the proud fastnesses of the times, where the wretched victims of oppression oft pined away their hours in solitary despondence? Who were to be relied on as the trusty organs of such secrets? and whither should they go for redress?

Were it possible to obtain an accurate statement of the numerous outrages that in those times might have been perpetrated in the short space of a week, it would present a catalogue, compared to which, for length and diversified horrors, the list of crime that but too often disgraces our modern journals, would sink into comparative insignificance. But, in drawing a fair parallel, there is also to be taken into account, in favour of modern times, the great increase of population, the multiplied wants that luxury has introduced, the present complicated and widely-extended intercourse between men and nations, social, professional, and commercial, and the facilities thus afforded to fraud and ingenuity, which were then unknown, but which now currently assume endless forms of deception. Giving their due weight to these considerations, it will appear

that, assuming a fair average, there now exists, probably, not a twentieth part in proportion of the vice and misery that oft prevailed during those feudal times.

The speedy publicity, and almost certain detection, that now follow every species of crime, cannot fail to operate as a powerful check to its commission; whereas in those ages, crime and impunity were twins, strangers equally to fear and to restraint. To such as close not wilfully the eyes of their understanding, conviction based on facts like these appears in no questionable form. The caviller at knowledge may well pause at the contemplation of a portrait which delineates human nature, when unenlightened and unsubdued, in a form so forbidding, wherein mental ignorance and moral turpitude are seen hand in hand, and both in their extremes; and were candour allowed to draw her unbiased inference from facts, the force of prejudice must yield to more just and liberal sentiments.

The sceptic too, in this imperfect sketch of the human heart, in a state of rude ignorance, blinded and perverted by unsocial passions, might turn his speculations to profit, and learn to appreciate better the great and solid advantages which Britain has reaped from the auspicious introduction of christianity in its present improved form. Since the great reformation in religion, a gradual and beneficial change has been effected in national manners and habits; and from that interesting epoch may be dated the progressive rise of England to the summit of earthly greatness. The social virtues, and science in all its useful forms, have steadily advanced together; and to separate them, if it were possible, would be to make a deadly breach in the social constitution. Mere abstract knowledge, without such connection, might be worthless, and even pernicious: it is solely under the sanction and guidance of true religion that it attains to its highest estimation, and is rendered available for the best interests of humanity.

The general spread of intelligence, on public and private

affairs, is in itself a knowledge that is highly favourable to the advancement of truth and the promotion of popular virtue, its direct tendency being to raise the mind above the narrowness of prejudice and of party views, as well as to strengthen the mental powers by their most congenial and rational exercise. The more conversant men are on all social questions, the greater interest will they naturally take in all that is passing around them; the more just as well as liberal will their sentiments become; the more excellent and pure will be their patriotism. The social spirit will not only move in a higher sphere, but will assume a kindlier form, and take a far wider range; and though the selfish principle be not eclipsed, yet, being less concentrated, it will lose much of its colour and strength. Hence the rights and liberties of all become equally respected; and wherever merit is found, it meets with approbation and reward.

Greatness, indeed, whether national or individual, owes its origin to virtue rather than to knowledge, yet attains not to its maturity without it, as history can testify. With the rise or the fall of Rome knowledge had little to do; though, in the plenitude of her power, it constituted the imperial diadem that gave dignity and sanction to her universal dominion; but it was to physical rather than to moral force, that she owed the beginnings of her unprecedented rise. Her power was raised and consolidated by physical strength, founded on the temperate virtues, and not by superior intelligence. By the hardy valour of her citizens she arose, and with the subsequent decline of frugality and bravery she fell from a height and power which had awed the world, and which she had fondly deemed would continue the sceptre of her unbounded rule to her sons, even to the end of time. As luxury advanced, virtue receded, and with it knowledge and good government also declined. The majestic empire had become the seat of corruption long before it was the theatre of devastation; it was a prey to internal anarchy ere it was overrun by the hordes of invading barbarians.

Thus indelibly do earthly power and human glory, even in their highest forms, bear the impress of vanity. To the retrospective eye of reason, as she scans the broad stream of time, they appear but as evanescent and glittering bubbles floating upon its current. Rome, like the mighty empires that preceded her, has for ever passed away, leaving scarcely a vestige of her ancient splendour, save in the treasures of literature and philosophy which she has bequeathed to the world; adding another and more striking illustration of the instability of sublunary greatness, when unsustained by Divine truth, and uncemented by christian virtue: the unwieldy fabric wanted the great corner-stone of vital religion; it was founded in the dust, and it fell.

It is not easy for man, in the present civilized age, to compute the full extent of his obligations to Christianity: to its goodly influence he is indebted, not only for improving and rectifying his virtue, but also for the increase and refinement of his knowledge; nothing short of its pure and potent light could clear his moral atmosphere, strengthen his mental sight, and rectify his views and aims: its benignity and splendour alone could, and did, expel the mists of idolatry, and free the mind from the slavish bondage of heathenism. Since the dawn of heavenly light, knowledge has been as active in breaking asunder the servile chains of superstition, as in the darkness of ignorance she had been busy in forging them, and now progresses hand in hand with truth, vindicating the Majesty of heaven, while she proclaims the just prerogative of man.

Most edifying it is to the contemplative mind to witness the auspicious union of christian virtue with useful science; hence great things may be anticipated, and the best and fondest hopes of philanthropy may be happily realized. Religion and knowledge were never meant to be separated; by no law, Divine or human, has a divorce been ever pronounced between them; absurd indeed would appear the inference, that because man may, and sometimes has, retrograded in wisdom as he advanced

in philosophical knowledge, he must needs therefore recede from virtue as he approaches to science.

True it is that science loves the aspiring eminence, and virtue oft prefers the humbler vale; but their confines meet, nor is it wisdom's province to build a wall of separation between them, for truth admits of no arbitrary distinctions. The detached heights of science, when viewed alone, are sometimes barren and unproductive, rather flattering the imagination than fruitful in themselves, and the many springs that descend from their summits are often lost in the sandy wastes of speculation; but when blended with the rich streams that flow from virtue and religion, their course is marked by all that is fair and flourishing, nor can the most sanguine and gifted mind predict the many and great advantages, public and private, that may, and doubtless shall, flow with them to future generations.

It must be confessed, after all, that honourable and estimable as knowledge unquestionably is, yet, considered alone, it bears no comparison with the endearing and enduring graces of virtue and moral goodness: the lack of science renders few miserable; the want of virtue makes millions wretched. A benevolent heart is better than a learned head: the one is to each a centre of happiness in itself, and a source of it to all around; the other, alone, can give no security for individual content, nor for universal esteem.

ESSAY VI.

PRACTICAL HINTS TO PARENTS——ON THE VARIETY OF THE YOUTHFUL CHARACTER—ON THE COMPARATIVE MERITS OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC OR SCHOLASTIC TUITION—SUGGESTIONS RELATIVE TO SOME ESSENTIAL BUT NEGLECTED BRANCHES OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION—ANCIENT NATIONAL FEATURES WORTH PRESERVING—A CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTION, WHETHER RELIGION SHOULD INVARIABLY TAKE THE LEAD IN SYSTEMS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

On doubtful and important questions it is the prerogative of reason to decide; but it is the character of reason to pause and investigate ere she determine, to inquire and deliberate ere she fix; and the higher the object she contemplates, the more careful will she be wisely to adapt the means to the end in view. Thus critically are parents circumstanced with respect to education; and the like prudent course they are bound to pursue, as the safest and the best. To every worthy and considerate parent education necessarily becomes the cause of deep and heartfelt solicitude, because such alone are fully sensible how greatly the future welfare of their offspring depends upon, and is, as it were, interwoven with it. Nor is the question, as to the most effectual means of insuring its advantages, a point that may often be easily decided; on the contrary, it is in many cases beset with doubts and difficulties sufficient to exercise, if not to perplex, the acutest understanding.

Amid the endless variety of pretensions and claims to patronage set forth by modern systems, the parent oft finds

himself in a labyrinth, wherein his judgment is bewildered and without a guide, and where the numerous paths that present themselves are equally dubious as to their termination; and reason is appealed to in vain, for she is unable to reveal their hidden course of operation, or to predict any certain result from vague and untried professions.

Experiment alone can determine the relative merits of contending systems; and this, in the case of education, is an experiment much too costly for the conscientious and affectionate parent lightly to hazard. What augments the difficulty is, that such conclusions as are derivable from reason, being general, will not apply to particular cases, but are unavoidably subject to numberless exceptions, arising from the diversity of genius, temperament, and disposition by nature inherent in the very constitution of human beings. The same marked variety of shades and extremes that chequers the characters of men whose powers are matured, and their passions exposed to worldly excitement, doubtless obtains in due proportion also in the youthful breast, though the embryo may be latent for want of suitable objects to develop and call it into action. Youth is a true miniature of manhood; its character presenting the same features, passions, and antipathies in their minor proportions; and the stronger the light in which it is placed, the more clearly may we trace the resemblance.

This diversity in the youthful character is self-evident, and so universally acknowledged, that formally to insist or enlarge upon it is needless. As a universal axiom it requires no laboured demonstration; and the more we extend our observation of the youthful character, the stronger will the conviction be: whether we look into the domestic circle of private, or emerge into public life, the same striking variety every where meets us. Nor does it excite our surprise as a rare occurrence, even when we behold the most decided and unaccountable contrast in different members of the same family, where reason, unaided by experience, would expect to find at least something like a

similarity in the tastes and pursuits of such as are connected by the ties of kindred, and of habitual companionship.

By the inscrutable, but doubtless wise appointment of Heaven, this diversity is found to obtain universally; it is coeval with the world, and will prevail while the laws of nature continue to operate. In childhood its first manifestations appear in a continuous round of puerile predilections and inconsistencies; with the growth of years it strengthens, taking a more decided form and a wider range, until the ruling bias of the mind is developed in bold relief, enabling us often to pronounce with confidence on the leading features of the future character from particular indications of genius, taste, habit, and disposition. From the youth that is bold, enterprising, and impatient of control, we often turn to contemplate one who is, in an equal degree, meek, timid, and retiring. By nature some are ever active, contentious, and bustling; others are altogether as studious, sedentary, and pacific; while presumption and artifice, diffidence and simplicity, seriousness and levity, magnanimity and meanness, by turn appear in their genuine colours; and from this singular medley of contradictions in the youthful character arises the main difficulty of adjusting formal systems to principles of action so contradictory.

Were the youthful mind a consistent agent, and uniform in its operation, instead of being what it often is, a compound of unaccountable and uncontrollable irregularities, the main difficulty would disappear, and it would be easy to form systems comprising ample provision for the few incidental casualties and varieties that would remain: to the faculties severally their due proportion of aliment and exercise would be effectually assigned, and the actual improvement of the mental powers, with their individual and collective attainments in every department and in every stage of education, might be readily ascertained. The reverse, however, being the fact, we are constrained to relinquish all utopian schemes of perfection, and be content to avail ourselves with the solid realities within our

reach. But if we cannot embrace perfection as a whole, we can command its parts, and make them individually subservient to our general design, and hence may reap, in succession, all the various advantages that the most perfect system could produce. "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves," is an old and trite maxim, that holds equally true of education; and the parent who covets for his child the greatest amount of benefit, may insure it by wary attention to its progressive steps, marking each by its degree of improvement, securing its benefits one by one, and seizing every advantage that offers.

Supposing that it were possible to frame a system so comprehensive as to comprise all that is desirable, and so complicated as to descend to the minute and endless ramifications of character, it would follow that the very application of such a system would demand the most consummate wisdom and incessant vigilance to carry it into proper effect, and make it fully available; for unless upheld by the agency of superior sagacity, energy, and industry, the most wisely-contrived systems fall soonest to the ground, and avail no more than the ingenious but useless mechanism of a watch, where the main spring of the machinery is wanting to insure its proper operation.

To discern and cherish the first tendencies to good, to detect and counteract the beginnings of evil, are primary objects; but they lie not within the pale of systems, requiring the exercise of superior penetration to measure the evil and the good, and, by means best suited to the occasion, to stimulate the one, and neutralize the other. Systems are but forms; their whole operation is therefore formal; they suffice to smooth the path of science, and facilitate its acquirements; externals they may regulate, habits of order they may enforce, but cannot reach the heart, or influence its affections: here reason must timely interpose with her appeals, her motives, and her convictions, dispensing her salutary aid as exigencies may require. Hence we may safely adopt Pope's maxim on

governments, which, whether or not it consist with true policy in the sense of the poet, will fully apply to systems of youthful discipline; for the best-framed plan is but a dead letter until enforced in such a manner as to produce its intended effect, which obviously and wholly depends on the mode of conducting it; and this necessarily depends on the individual merit of the party to whom its direction is confided, whose constant and judicious aim it should be to excite that cordial co-operation of the youthful mind, which in every system is so essential to success.

With the well-informed, the character and qualifications of the preceptor will always be the leading consideration, and the system a secondary one. Since systems have no determinate operation, they depend solely for their effect on the instrumentality of a casual agency; and whatever stress may be laid on a chosen system, and however the preceptor may profess to be swayed by it, yet it is presumed that few entertain so very humble an opinion of their own understandings as to put it into leading-strings. No man voluntarily surrenders the right of exercising his private judgment whenever it is appealed to; on the contrary, it might be deemed rare indeed were he not to give it the ascendancy over all stated forms and rules, subjecting them in every step of their operation to the control and guidance of his own mind; and hence, should even the same system be enforced in a hundred different instances, its application would be found to vary in each, in consequence of that marked dissimilarity of character, which obtains equally among preceptors as among their pupils.

To the ever-varying temperament of youth must, in part, be referred that difference of sentiment that has ever prevailed on the comparative merits of private and public or scholastic instruction; but though it may not be easy to pronounce decidedly and in general terms on their relative excellences, because the eligibility of either depends on its aptitude to the peculiar bent of the individual, yet it is a question that offers a fair and open field, presenting no difficulties beyond the

grasp of reason, aided by clear views of the advantages and disadvantages connected with each, which, combined with a due insight into the juvenile character, and a right estimate of its power, will in most cases furnish an all-sufficient clue to determine its peculiar fitness for either mode in preference to the other. Premising that the glance we have taken at the fallibility of systems may have sufficed to prove that personal ability, independent of systems, is preferable to any system without such agency, we come to the separate consideration of the positive and probable benefits of private and public tuition; also, the disadvantages and inconveniences incidental to each, in connection with their course of operation.

Among the leading advantages of private instruction may be enumerated its being decidedly favourable to the formation of those habits of study, which form the surest basis of a steadily progressing improvement, and greatly facilitating every intellectual acquisition. The mind being subject to few interruptions that would divide the attention, is enabled to fix itself steadily on its object; and that contemplative turn of mind, which has ever been deemed the nurse of wisdom, is thus effectually promoted. When earnestly engaged in the pursuit of knowledge, the mind should be left at liberty, the better to command and arrange its thoughts, and to connect and review its operations at leisure; for the force of conviction depends much on that vigour of thought which, by a habit of close investigation, attains to a full and clear comprehension. Strength of reason is generated by the regular and undisturbed exercise of its powers; and without some such provision, knowledge will rarely strike any deep root, and may be said rather to pass through the mind than to fix its abode in it.

When in a state of perfect liberty, and set free, as it were, from all fear of interruption, the mind collects all its energies, and concentrates them at will; she is then enabled successfully to grapple with difficulties, and, with the aid of perseverance, gradually to surmount every obstacle that would impede her

progress; thus ultimately accomplishing the highest designs to which the intellect of man can aspire. Nor are the retired habits of a private education less favourable to moral virtue than to mental culture; and though it may be a soil adapted rather to the growth of the passive than of the active virtues, yet it is but fair to concede that virtues of the first rank, and by way of eminence termed cardinal, exclusively belong to the former class: it also gives the best security for docility of manners, and offers, perhaps, the surest safeguard for innocence and integrity, by shielding the passions from the contagion of corrupting examples, and from the seductive influence of temptation. During the critical season of youth, the absence of evil amounts to a positive good, and may, in many cases, be accounted a main desideratum. The seeds of many virtues, though planted with care, yield oft but a scanty harvest; while the growth of one neglected vice will outstrip calculation, and choke the increase of many rising virtues. To prevent one vice from taking root, to eradicate one of the traces of evil in the spring-time of life, avails more in the cause of truth and virtue, than much pains to promote them without such precaution; for in every seed of vice that is early crushed, a long train of ever-multiplying evils is, in effect, at once and for ever annihilated.

Weighty, however, as such considerations are, and powerfully as they seem to plead in favour of a private education, they are not in themselves directly conclusive; for it is evidently from its most excellent forms alone, when conducted in the wisest manner, that such desirable and happy effects may reasonably be expected: in all other cases it becomes a doubtful question, involving many considerations vitally connected with the best interests of manhood as well as of youth. An impartial view of its effects alone can, in any case, determine its real merits; and the only unerring test of superior excellence must be sought in the superiority of the advantages it confers, and these necessarily depend on the wisdom and intelligence that

plans a course of operation, and governs its particular movements.

It must be admitted that private education is by no means exempt from its share of serious inconveniences, which, when not effectually guarded against by a well-timed precaution, are often pregnant with mischief, and have not unfrequently assumed a form and character so forbidding, as to yield ground for serious objections. We may safely proceed a step further, and assert, that ill-judged and ill-managed private plans are far more objectionable than the most faulty among systems of a more social character, which at least have the merit of exercising the affections while they stimulate the passions, of sharpening the wit, and of supplying constant food for the needful growth of common sense.

Wholly to immure a being so sensitive as man in the spring-time of his life, would be, in effect, to crush many of the seeds both of happiness and virtue, by repressing the first generous ardours of his spirit. So little congenial to the active temperament of youth is a state of abstraction, that although habit may partially reconcile him to it, yet a private education, enforced in its strictest sense, would militate against itself, by depriving the spirits of their healthful play, and prove detrimental alike to health and to mental exertion. The moral principle, it is true, might be uncontaminated, yet, being inert, it could hardly be said to possess a healthful tone; having been but little exercised, its strength and stability could not be relied on. If the social and moral principles and affections be progressive, as they unquestionably are, it follows that by a regular exercise and gradation alone can they attain their proper growth; and to impede their incipient operation, would be to sever the first links of a mystical chain, which, when broken, may never be repaired. They, therefore, who adopt a system of private education on the ground of its peculiar advantages, would do well to have an eye to its manifest inconveniences, which it will ever be needful to temper and

counteract by timely provisions of a social kind. It is evident that, when too rigidly enforced, habits of protracted seclusion are apt to engender a sickly sensibility, which is the certain prelude to a wide sphere of real or imaginary distress; not only does the social principle languish while the passions are abridged of their proper and congenial action, but that experimental wisdom, which is perhaps worth all besides, and which is only acquired by social intercourse and interchange of sentiment, is wholly superseded, and perhaps irretrievably lost; and to this often must be added the formation and growth of uncouth and eccentric manners and habits, which are the too common consequence of a discipline as injudicious as it is unnatural.

One obvious advantage that scholastic tuition possesses, is that of not being subject to the inconveniences arising from undue mental abstraction, and to which all plans of private education are more or less exposed. But this negative merit by no means constitutes the chief recommendation of public tuition, as it comprises many features equally important and beneficial, and which may be regarded as exclusively its own. Its very frame and constitution being wholly of a social character, it necessarily brings into active operation all the latent springs of the mind, elicits the social principles and affections, and applies the spur of emulation to all the intellectual energies. Competition, while it gives a charm to exertion, stimulates to excellence by the prospect of honour and praise: as the field of contest widens by increased rivalry, so the prize of fame and applause that crowns the successful aspirant rises in attraction and estimation; and the youth who has once tasted the lively pleasure attendant on success, is inspirited to redoubled exertions, which thus become the stepping-stone to those lofty and honourable aspirings, which confer true dignity on the character in advanced life. By such repeated efforts being put frequently on the stretch, the rational powers acquire a vigour and elasticity, by no other means attainable.

For the perfecting of the intellect, two things appear to be essentially requisite—a strong and active mental discipline on the one hand, relieved by a seasonable and lively recreation on the other, viz. such a pleasurable refreshment, as may speedily and perfectly recruit the exhausted spirits, and thus preserve the tone of the mind. It is evident that such relaxations must necessarily partake largely of the social character; it will therefore be the part of wisdom by all rational means to secure an object so needful and desirable.

A well-ordered juvenile society may be likened to an initiatory world divested of its evils, and stored with all the requisite means of mental and moral culture: the mind, placed as it were within a sphere of ever-varied but congenial excitement, and encircled by a crowd of enterprising spirits, is put on its guard, and early taught the necessity of vigilance, and soon calls into exercise those hidden powers, which, without such stimulus, might languish and decay. There is doubtless a principle in the mind (though dormant oft for want of a sufficient impulse), which on the appearance of difficulty or danger ever rises with the occasion, collects its internal forces, and is roused to an exertion suited to the exigence, and thus is she enabled to compete with the varied opposition she is fated to encounter; and as this temper and quality of mind is of the greatest utility in advanced commerce with the world, it can scarcely be too early exercised and put to the test.

The friendly and generous affections, the primary incentives to virtue, here find their proper objects and their aliment; the leading features of the mind are developed, and its springs and motives detected, on whose right direction the health and vigour of character chiefly depend. Youth are by nature gifted with an observant eye, a susceptible heart, and a quick perception of right and wrong; an aptitude to embrace what is fair and comely, with a lively antipathy and disdainful rejection of whatever bears the taint of meanness and disgrace. In a youthful community, like a miniature republic, circumstances

will rarely be wanting to display both the amiable and the odious qualities in their genuine characters. The glow of youthful enthusiasm gives force and colouring to all that engages the attention, or creates an interest in the mind; virtue stands confessed in her native loveliness, and vice assumes her natural deformity. In the formality of precept, design may be suspected, but in ordinary occurrences none: from the instructive portraiture the mind draws its own conclusions; the salutary lesson is carried home to the heart; the impression therefore is the more vivid and abiding.

Nothing teaches like the living example: he who sees another caressed by his comrades, for his courage, generosity, or other estimable quality, infers that the possession of it is necessary to command esteem, and straight endeavours to acquire it. By witnessing the contempt lavished on a schoolmate for some unsocial or unamiable peculiarity, he hastens to divest himself even of its appearance, lest he should incur a similar mortification; and thus may a predisposition to pride, parsimony, profuseness, or indolence, be counteracted: being ashamed of those features which they see thus reflected in others, it is their early care to reform them. By seeing that distinction is conferred on merit alone, youth are taught impartiality and a noble scorn of flattery, and thus learn to pay respect only where it is justly due. The best wisdom being experimentally derived, requires those practical helps, which none but a social system can supply. By continued and familiar intercourse with a diversity of character and talent, the mind attains to a liberality of sentiment, and an expansion, that render it superior to the narrowness of prejudiced views.

It is one, and not the least, part of Education to rectify the mental bias; ambition will develop it, but by emulation only can it be rightly directed. Wherever the love of praise takes root in the mind, it will aspire to excel, and when foiled in one pursuit, will attempt another. The checks it may receive are as salutary warnings to change its object and vary its

course, till rewarded with better success. By such experimental discipline the mind arrives at a knowledge of its own powers, and learns to adapt them to their proper objects; and such self-knowledge forms the basis of the most profitable wisdom. Many and great are the advantages connected with well-conducted social plans of education, comprising all that is desirable for incipient probation, favourable alike to knowledge, truth, and virtue, and supplying abundant exercise for the strengthening of the reasoning faculty, and the production of a manly and magnanimous spirit; and, to crown the whole, the cordial co-operation of the youthful mind accompanies it throughout, seconding its design, and forwarding its accomplishment.

It must here, however, be conceded, that the connexion between theory and practice (which in reason should progress together) is so fragile and precarious, that the one, instead of being the counterpart and illustration of the other, presents ofttimes a singular and unhappy contrast; and this observation is sometimes remarkably verified in modern education. In looking at the working of our public systems, rarely can we trace their beneficial results so visibly and generally as to justify such warmth of eulogium, or even keep pace in any degree consistent with the anticipations which many have been led to cherish; and judging from the effects in the aggregate, it seems almost questionable whether the good or the evil preponderate, though it would perhaps be neither safe nor satisfactory to attempt an isolated solution of so complicated a problem. Many concurrent causes, both hidden and obvious, conspire to involve it in doubt and perplexity. Among the more obvious reasons of failure, imperfect and faulty, or misconducted plans, may be assigned, wherein the headstrong current of youthful impulse takes its own wilful course. Certain it is that a public education, while it offers greater facilities for improvement, is inevitably exposed to a greater variety of dangers, requiring the careful eye and guiding hand of a

guardian spirit to shield the vulnerable points of the unconfirmed character from the hourly assaults to which it is exposed.

Hence it appears that the superior advantages which public tuition holds out are, in no small degree, counterpoised by the perilous and hazardous position in which it places probationary virtue. The extension of greater liberty, while it opens an enlarged sphere for the exercise of talent, allows a wider scope to the irregular passions, and supplies them with stronger and more frequent excitement. A stricter and more guarded rein is therefore desirable, if not indispensable, without which even its best features would be liable to distortion. Emulation itself, without a judicious guidance, instead of begetting a generous enthusiasm, might degenerate to envy and malice, and introduce a train of low passions, whose malignant influence would taint the moral atmosphere, spreading the infection from breast to breast, clouding the mind, and disturbing its operations; for reason and experience equally testify that any ascendancy of the unsocial passions involves not merely the loss of time, but, in proportion as it obtains, is fatal to virtue and detrimental to improvement.

As in private tuition, the tribute of unmixed approbation is due only to its best and most efficient form, so in a rational estimate of public systems are we to be guided rather by their positive effects than by any inferred or supposed merits, and limit our cordial commendation to such as are manifestly beneficial in their ordinary and hourly operation. Either a private or a public course of education may merit our censure or praise, accordingly as it is administered. Each has its redeeming points; and objectionable ones are common to both. It is therefore by the preponderance of good in particular cases that the scale of judgment must be turned. Wherever the fruits of virtue and knowledge best flourish and abound, they supply the plainest evidence of the soil and culture.

Private tuition is apparently more favourable to innocence and moral purity of character, involving often those mild and

endearing qualities, that sweeten the private sphere of domestic life; nor is it less eligible for the proper inculcation of those primary truths and principles which require to be digested and deeply engrafted on the memory, or for the culture of those high mental endowments which constitute the character of the sage, or for the speedier and more certain attainment of its object in deep researches, or in any one engrossing pursuit. We may add, that the mind, when long shielded from error, and conversant only with the forms of truth and moral beauty, is rarely accessible to evil; its perception of and disgust at moral turpitude is quickened and rendered more acute, enabling it the more readily both to detect fallacies and to confute them.

Public tuition is unquestionably better adapted for the acquisition of those popular and manly talents which are associated with public spirit and independence, to which we may add, those social arts and accomplishments which, if not essential to success among men, are greatly instrumental towards it. These advantages, however, cannot always ensure their object, nor atone for the frequent innovations that interrupt a course of scholastic study and check improvement,—the attention is hourly drawn aside. The living example makes the stronger impression, but whether better or worse depends wholly on the nature of the example. Fully to produce its effects, that which is presented to the observation of youth should at least equal in worth and excellence those which biography has selected and reserved for the purposes of instruction. Without being invidious, it may be conceded that such living examples are rare—whither then shall we point the attention of youth, but to the dead who have most excelled in virtue?

Thus public and private tuition have each their characteristics, to which we may look for a fair criterion of their merits. The one nourishes the mind by training it to habits of studious contemplation; the other kindles genius by the spark of emu-

lation. This yields the best security for moral dignity of character; that supplies the mind with a fund of available talent. The one best inculcates the current wisdom of this world; the other is rather allied to science in the abstract, and to wisdom of a higher order, whose aspirations are often foreign to, and incompatible with, sublunary pursuits.

How, then, shall the parent choose, since it appears that by adhering closely to either, some real advantages will be lost, and also a certain amount of evil or danger incurred? But by what law, it may be asked, is the parent bound to make any election? or rather, if reason be a law, does it not plainly suggest the remedy, by alternately adopting either as occasion may require, with a view to combine and secure the advantages derivable from each, at the same time obviating the evils that might arise from too partial adherence to either?

If in the complex nature of modern education occasionally to vary its form be thus desirable, as comprising a twofold benefit, it appears somewhat surprising that it should not have met with more strenuous advocates, and that its practice should not have been more frequently enforced; but some are always ready to start objections to every apparent innovation, on the alleged ground, that progress is ever retarded by any deviation from a settled course of study; but be this as it may in the estimation of some, every sensible parent will, in the case of his own child, find a better guide in his own judgment than in that of all others united. Some, while admitting it to be desirable, will affect to deem it impracticable; but if it promise sufficient utility to recommend the experiment, the futility of such objections may easily be proved. Periodically to vary the plan of tuition is surely not less practicable than other customary changes in domestic arrangements, of late years so common. We see, as a matter of course, family establishments broken up, and alternately transferred from town to country, or to the continent, from prudential motives of health, pleasure, or convenience, or as the season may prompt a change of

residence, or it may be merely for fashion's sake. If in such secondary matters the will and the judgment go hand in hand, how much rather in education should the parent be swayed by reason alone, independent of all systems; and even though acknowledging perhaps a decided predilection for one, yet not surrendering reason as a captive to any, but rather by her agency making all, as far as may be, subservient to the one desirable end.

The ancients seem generally to have entertained a preference for private tuition, hence their princes and nobles were anxious at any cost to obtain the most celebrated philosophers of the times as tutors to their sons; and thus were formed many of those characters, the splendour of whose talents and virtues are the ornament of history. But granting exceptions, and admitting that such partiality was not always founded on the conviction of its superior efficacy, it yet seems perfectly natural and reasonable, considering that the needful facilities for the acquirement of knowledge (now so common as to be within the reach of all) were in those days wholly unknown; such means as existed being limited to a favoured few. In fairness, however, it should be observed, that what is now designated private tuition, has few features in common with that course of discipline by which those sage and heroic characters were modelled. With them education was not a formal system of books, terminating with the season of youth; and on languages little or no stress was laid. Its avowed and immediate object was the acquisition of manly accomplishments, and popular mental endowments blended with general intelligence. Magnanimity and fortitude of mind were held to be primary and indispensable qualifications; eloquence and rhetoric were cultivated for the sake of the personal superiority they conferred; nor was any talent omitted that might command respect or conciliate affection. The philosophic tutor was at once a counsellor and companion, a paternal guardian and a bosom friend; hence the happiest results might well be anticipated.

The eligibility of any mode of tuition in every case obviously depends, not so much on its abstract merits, as on its peculiar fitness and adaptation to that mind which is to be the object of its influence and operation; hence the wisdom and expediency of well consulting the natural genius and disposition of youth: guided by such knowledge, which may be termed the true light of nature, the parental judgment will rarely be betrayed into error.

Such is the variety of the youthful genius and temperament, that rarely does a likeness obtain in any two minds, even in their leading traits, much less in the minuter gradations of shade and colouring. Whether the ruling bias be strongly marked, and early developed, or whether it be latent, so as almost to challenge detection, there is unquestionably in every mind some inherent peculiarity, and it behoves the judicious parent to watch its growth and progress even from its earliest indications; hence the judgment may safely determine when a change of discipline may be eligible, as also the nature and extent of it. The too pliant, no less than the inflexible temper, may need a counteraction. The fragile mind may sink without timely support; the robust may incur danger from the opposite extreme of presumption. The lively genius of one, perhaps, makes him the centre of every convivial circle; the timidity of another will scarce allow him to venture within its limits: and in the many paths of study so rare is literary companionship, that should any two agree in the choice of a track, seldom will they keep pace together, so as to persevere in it for any length of time.

The qualities of different minds are as diversified as the hues and properties of gems: some chiefly shine by their inherent lustre; others please most by contrast or reflection. The native vigour and vivacity of one mind is analogous to the innate splendour of the ruby; while the unobtrusive merit, which charms in another, resembles rather the mild and chastened attraction of the emerald; but in none are the

opposite perfections combined. The borrowed light, which displays to advantage the brilliancy of the diamond, serves but to dim the lustre of the pearl, which appears best by the sober light diffused by the orb of day. Doubtless, the latent talent with which every mind is imbued, may be superseded by misdirecting its energies. To avert, however, the danger that might spring from error on this point, it will be desirable to discriminate well between the counterfeit quality and the true. What is rightly termed mental bias, should be a genuine and uniform impulse, a steady bent of mind towards excellence in some chosen and rational pursuit. That which is sometimes mistaken for it, is rather an acquired predilection, often partaking largely of passion and caprice, and consequently ever liable to change or terminate with its object: in the one it is a partial and temporary excitement, in which some passion takes the lead; in the other it is a permanent and progressive principle, superior to, and wholly independent of, passion. A sufficient illustration of this is found in the characters of many who are justly celebrated for pre-eminence in some favourite branch of knowledge to which they devoted their time and talent. Such literary champions have (mostly from choice) commenced early the path that led them to fame, and have ever been crowned by a steady perseverance in it. In the abstruser sciences and sublimer studies, as also in the elegant arts, how many have attributed their extraordinary proficiency to an innate and insuperable impulse, urging them onward, superior to discouragements, and seemingly gaining an accession of strength with every step in its progress.

Such examples are, however, comparatively rare in a general view of mankind. The character of man in the aggregate has uniformly borne the same impress; from the hidden springs of the human heart the like passions have flowed from age to age, swelling and agitating the eventful tide of human counsel and action, impelling, with seemingly resistless force, the successive generations of men; neither is it by genius of an

ordinary grade, nor by a mediocrity of moral energy, that the strength of the current has at any period been effectually resisted.

In the moral, as in the natural world, the same conflicting elements have struggled from the beginning, being compounded alike of those discordant principles which are essential to their established operation. The multitude are ever swayed by present impressions, by the like ambition in manhood, and the same love of pleasure in youth, in their diversified forms and attractions;—all are borne along by the fleeting impulse of passion, whether it be a thirst for novelty or enterprise, or the inordinate lust of wealth and power, or of rivalry in its many forms, which may commonly be traced to a movement of pride; and in all these passion takes the lead. Thus martial ardour, or a thirst for military glory, is oft no more than an acquired passion, wherein the imagination has been dazzled, and the heart captivated, by the glowing narrative of heroic exploits; but how soon is the infatuation at an end, when the fallacy is unmasked, and the painful reality made known by experience, dearly bought, and when, perhaps too late, sober reason and reflection have stripped the enchantress delusion of her flattering veil!

A strong and original bias is a rare gift of nature, an indication of some future excellence, common only to minds of the first order, enabling them to preserve a uniform course in pursuit of the chosen object: the main distinction appears to be, that in strong and choicely-gifted minds reason gets the mastery of passion; whereas in weaker minds passion, by a continued struggle, obtains the ascendancy. It is plain, that when the reasoning powers are feeble, motives and actions must fluctuate; every new and striking aspect is then sufficient to turn aside the current of thought and influence the conduct: aptly may this be termed instability; and probably in the whole round of what is called genius, the feature most to be prized

is that general ability which guarantees success by perseverance, on whatever object it may be exercised.

The most civilized periods have always been the most productive not only of those highly-prized talents which command success, but also of the more estimable qualities of the heart; whereas times of prevailing barbarism present a picture of human degeneracy, in which the leading features are few, but repulsive. In every community the least cultivated portion is apparently the least distinguished for that virtuous elevation of character, which is the true crown of humanity. Nature, wholly unillumined, is doomed to wander oft without a direct path or settled motive among the mazes of ignorance and sensuality, wherein the imbecility of advanced age is but a protracted childhood despoiled of its innocence.

In the effeminate and half-civilized nations of the east, the mind rarely exhibits strong and manly traits, or even a decided bias of character, but, chamelion-like, takes its present hue from what is nearest to it, and is rather the sport of accident, and the creature of circumstance, than the seat of intelligence. As the aid of the polisher is requisite to produce the latent vein in marble, so is the hand of culture needful to develop aright the bent of genius. In the pliant age of childhood, when the will needs direction, and seems to exist but to obey it, a bias may perhaps be imparted to a mind of ordinary stamp; but the opportunity neglected, leaves a vacuum in the mind, to be filled by indiscriminate associations, by which its weakness is flattered, and its errors confirmed. It is a currently received opinion, that early predilections supply the truest indication of the pursuit in which the individual is destined to excel, and that by fostering it we are seconding the wise intent of Providence; but though grounded in reason, this, like other theories, lies open to many exceptions.

To concentrate the varied powers of a vigorous intellect on one point, must necessarily contract their natural sphere of

action; and when superior genius is coupled (as it often is) with a sanguine temperament, the ardour of passion will mingle with and colour all its operations, tending to a hurtful extreme even in what is laudable; and hence the frequent and lamentable self-sacrifice of genius from over-devotedness to its all-engrossing object. It has at all times been the too common fate of great talent, especially of a literary stamp, to consign its possessor to a premature grave by inducing an extreme in studious application, ruinous alike to health of body and mind; and when the impetuosity of passion is added, and brought to bear on the ruling impulse, its ascendancy must destroy the equilibrium of the mind, and counteract the very intention of Education, whose province is to regulate the passions by controlling the stronger and bringing the weaker into proper operation; for there is no passion so weak but it will (if stimulated to excess) speedily run to an injurious extreme.

Among the various considerations by which parents may be influenced, who choose to educate their children under their own eye, those of greatest weight probably arise from a conviction either of the time consumed by the undue stress often laid at schools on things of comparatively little use in after life, or the not laying a sufficient stress on things of indispensable and acknowledged utility in worldly affairs, and in daily commerce with mankind. In the established forms of school systems the pupils are of course, without distinction, expected to comply, and over this order of things the parent, though the party chiefly interested, has no control. Private tuition, then, recommends itself as not lying open to such objections, and the sole points of inquiry will be, as to what qualifications are really most desirable, and next, as to the best and most efficacious means of securing them.

In conformity with the sentiments laid down in a former essay, and to avoid the ill consequences of putting the intellect too soon upon the stretch, the author would suggest the propriety of devoting the first period of education to attainments

requiring the least mental exertion, such as may fully engage the mind without wearying its faculties; for it is repugnant to reason to begin by taxing the tender intellect of a child, and loading its memory with dry and abstruse technicalities, and the grammatical structure of ancient tongues, and subsequently occupy the mind (when the faculties are stronger) in the mechanical drudgery of writing, and of other occupations equally simple, which, though admirably fitted for childhood, must often be taken up unseasonably, because not acquired when they should have been.

Few, it is presumed, will deny the expediency of beginning with the plain but sterling arts of writing and reading, not only from their eminent utility, and because their simplicity is well suited to the childish capacity, but because excellence in these is conducive to higher attainments, and because excellence in either depends on timely cultivation. As by early practice the free command of the pen is best acquired, so is a natural and graceful delivery best ensured by the same means. The mind cannot, perhaps, be too soon familiarised with the first principles of calculation and English grammar, nor can colloquial exercise by catechisms be too much recommended. Scarcely is there a branch of science that is not now brought down to the level of the weakest intellect: many and admirable treatises abound in the various branches of elementary knowledge, in which rational information is happily blended with moral truth, divested of formality, and blended with attractions which smooth and adorn the path of learning, converting what was formerly an irksome task into a comparative amusement.

Order in study is the wisest economy of time and labour, by so regulating its course that its various branches may follow in succession as their difficulty augments. The equal progress may also be greatly facilitated by making present pursuits subservient to future attainments. It is, in most cases, easy to make one study the means of improvement in others: elocution and composition may be thus blended, and the practice

of both made subservient to historical or other knowledge, as it is evident these talents may be exercised on any subject within the range of literature. By committing to writing, portions of geography, grammar, &c. designed to be learned, the memory is greatly assisted by fixing the attention, while freedom in the style of writing, with a readiness of expression and a habit of precision, are insensibly acquired.

It is doubtless as essential that the mind be prepared for the right reception of knowledge, as that proper knowledge be imparted to the mind; it must therefore be a desirable and leading object in all preparatory education, so to expand and strengthen the understanding, that it may convert to its proper nourishment what it receives. By prematurely and indiscriminately crowding the weak intellect with information, the operation of its rational energies will be retarded; and that which impedes the growth of reason can add but little to the stock of knowledge. In the order of education those studies, perhaps, should take the lead which afford the fairest field for the progressive exercise of the reasoning faculties; and by this rule mathematical science may take precedence of languages, because proficiency in these is chiefly attainable by the force of memory; whereas the other depends solely on rational investigation, in which every step is, in fact, an advance of reason, and a higher evidence of intellectual power.

The first part of Education is too frequently marked by a total absence of that order and method which reason suggests, and which, like a ray of light, should extend throughout; not but that it may, in particular cases, be eligible to deviate from the formality of plans in compliance with striking traits of genius: wherever the indications of a rare or rich intellectual vein are apparent, it is wisdom to follow its direction. The right use of reason has, it is true, been reduced to a science, but its eligibility as such must be doubtful, if it appear that the same end is better effected by engaging the mind in the pursuit of knowledge, which is the fittest exercise of reason,

and progresses with it; whereas years may be devoted to dry and formal systems of logic, with little advantage beyond the arrangement of words and arguments.

A liberal education necessarily embraces a competent knowledge of geography, the main features and outlines of astronomy, and of all the leading facts of history, ancient and modern, with a graceful and easy elocution, and a natural and correct epistolary style: these are talents needful to all, and being attainable by all, no plea of excuse remains to justify ignorance. But desirable as these talents are in the transactions of business, as well as for their hourly use for all the purposes of rational intercourse, very rarely are they cultivated in a degree proportioned to their just claims.

The ancients, in these respects, were wiser than the moderns, who fail to imitate while they profess to admire them. With them the many and obvious advantages of eloquence had full weight, as the certain means of conferring superiority, and creating a wider distinction between man and man than any difference of rank, or even, perhaps, than the more solid qualities of the heart. They regarded it as the crown of human abilities, as an intellectual engine superior to any physical force, by moving the passions of the public mind at will, and thus swaying the destinies of empires. Rome was even mightier in eloquence than in arms: there was nothing great or wonderful but it attempted and achieved, turning the tide of war, humbling the tyrant and the conqueror, and laying corruption prostrate in the dust: minor distinctions were eclipsed by its splendour and power; without it the patrician was a cipher; with it the plebeian gave laws to the world.

As its native element rhetoric comprises all that is great and grand, but descends from the sublimest heights to the humblest offices of life; through the endless gradations of intercourse, forming at once the charm of social converse, the bond of friendship, and the sweetener of affection; adding grace and dignity even to the oracles of heavenly truth, and vindicating

the right and majesty of human laws; blending the powers of persuasion, in the senate, with harmonizing attractions, and making graceful delivery the effectual organ of wisdom, and the surer means of rational conviction. It can penetrate the inmost recesses of the heart, and awaken its finest sensibilities; nor is there any period of time, nor any circumstance of life, from which its agency and influence are excluded.

Equal in utility, and closely associated with this talent, is the sister art of composition, or the power of condensing and arranging our chosen thoughts, and committing them to writing in the best form of words. Oratory and composition are twin talents, the offspring of the same discriminating judgment, and the like cultivated taste; but each has its distinguishing features, and to each a separate office is assigned; but that of the latter, though far less imposing, has a much wider range of influence. Oral eloquence is mightiest to effect a present design, but its influence is local, and limited to a circle of auditors; its noblest strains may be ill appreciated, and their impression rather vivid than lasting. By both, the divine faculties of speech and reason are made subservient to the noblest ends; but from the tongue, as from a fountain, the richest strains of eloquence might flow in vain, though combining all the energies of truth and language, were there none to record; and how oft would the effusions of genius have been lost to the world had the pen of the ready writer lain idle! It is this alone that gives a lasting character to the beauties, and immortality to those excellences, which shall command esteem so long as superior merit and virtue shall be prized among men.

To this art we are indebted for all our knowledge—the accumulated store of ages. By it the arcana of wisdom are transferred from language to language, and disseminated throughout the earth, or handed down to future times; and here are supplied the various channels of communication, by which remotest nations are connected, uniting as one great family all the nations under heaven. Its many advantages are

indeed too obvious to need encomium. Desirable, however, as these talents are by the rarity of excellence in either, it would seem that few are willing to be at the pains of acquiring them. So nearly are these accomplishments allied, that proficiency in one implies no small ability in the other, depending on the same operations of the mind, and attainable by similar means. In composition, much of the effect depends on felicity of expression, and in oratory on the mode of delivery; but in both, the matter must ever be of primary import. Wit and sense must be blended with truth and feeling, and the whole must be sustained by knowledge, to produce a full effect; for desirable as a graceful style or delivery may be, it constitutes no more than the dress and embellishment. Wisdom is the soul of eloquence, and it must be embodied in sound and well-digested information, without which all the glitter of external associations will avail but little.

Among the various plans that have been or may be suggested for the acquisition of these talents, there is none perhaps more efficacious than a well-planned course of reading, supplying at once a fund of solid information, with ample materials to exercise the thinking and reasoning powers. History seems to be admirably adapted for every purpose, embodying the most valuable intelligence in the best language; but this may take the lead without excluding approved authors in any other department of literature, whose merits and beauties recreate the mind by their variety, and supply the most agreeable food for the imagination. As a commanding elocution is attainable only by varied exercise, the same rule will apply to composition; but preparatory to any successful attempt in the latter, it is needful that the mind be familiarised with its subject; whereas the former is practicable with less preparation. For pupils who are more advanced, a course of reading may be so planned as to embrace every species of composition in turn; but with beginners, the first steps should be rendered encouraging by their simplicity. It is evident that, in every

case, none but works of standard merit in matter and style can properly serve as models of taste for youthful imitation. As the progress of reason and knowledge is the main design in all that is connected with education, history comes recommended by superior claims, being pregnant in every page with whatever is most interesting to humanity; and thus viewed, historical verity, in its plainest form, is preferable perhaps to the most eloquent strains of genius, or the richest flow of oratory, as supplying an inexhaustible fund of the richest materials for thought and reflection.

To render the study of history fully available for the purposes of rational improvement, it is most advisable to guard against a loose and desultory, but common habit, of wandering from subject to subject, and hovering over the surfaces of things without a determinate plan or object, by limiting the attention to some particular reign or remarkable epoch, till the mind and memory shall have become familiar and conversant with the leading characters and most striking events of the time in question. Every such section will supply an ample field for the congenial exercise of the youthful understanding. While tracing the agitated current of human affairs, and the incessant ebb and flow of public and private interests, with the endless conflict of rival passions, the youthful mind may be led to contemplate the watchful eye and retributive hand of Heaven, visibly interposing to interrupt and change their ordinary course, overruling the counsels of men, and by some unforeseen event or sudden impulse, giving a new direction to their aims and energies.

Historical narrative abounds in the fittest themes for rational comment. Here truth is most powerfully developed, assuming a thousand varied and instructive forms; and here the Divine economy is plainly illustrated. Often are the perverse aims of folly and presumption visibly frustrated by failure and disgrace; while the well-directed counsels of worth and wisdom are matured and crowned with the happiest results. This

choice manual of experience supplies such matter for social converse as is best fitted to exercise the judging faculty in every stage of its progress, from things of easy and obvious inference, to subjects of the deepest investigation; and hence the mists of error and prejudice are most effectually dissipated. Civil and political convulsions; their rise and tendency; the internal and external condition of the realm at different eras, or as compared with neighbouring nations; the state of learning; the arts; manufactures; the military, commercial, and naval position of the empire with respect to rival powers; or the yet more affecting detail of private worth and virtue, in the display of exalted heroism, integrity, and patriotism: hence are excited a laudable curiosity and interest, inducing a train of thought and inquiry, leading the mind to take its gratification in fresh supplies of information: thus true knowledge is secured, and the reasoning faculty profitably engaged; while the mind, with its views and powers, is expanded by the contemplation of what is striking and wonderful.

Knowledge, it is true, may be imparted, and even the power of reasoning aright, without the talent of embodying the thoughts, and arranging them in an appropriate form of language. The best means, probably, of obviating such an objection, will be to vary the pupil's exercise, by giving him some prose composition, remarkable for freedom and purity of style (from Addison or other standard writer), to copy out correctly: as an occasional, or even as a frequent exercise, this is practicable without interrupting a regular plan of study; and simple as it may appear, is the almost certain means, with perseverance, of attaining a similar style of elegance and accuracy; at all events, such a method will be found greatly to facilitate every subsequent attempt at composition.

On the practice and attainment of these arts, little that is original remains to be advanced, save in the shape of recommendation, by the review and display of their advantages; it would seem, however, that they have commonly been regarded

and treated as acquisitions, having little or no connexion with, or dependence on, that knowledge which forms their proper basis, and the true criterion of their utility. The acute and lively genius of some boys, indeed, seems to need only a stimulus to put it in act, yet it is questionable whether the strongest genius has not the greatest need to be preceded by progressive advances in knowledge, to curb and give a right direction to its otherwise eccentric flights, and to temper its native ardours: for youthful genius being of an active and roving temperament, without its guiding-star, and yoked with ignorance, would go incontinently astray, tending to alternate extremes of absurdity: not only on the public theatre of the world, but in every private scene of action, untutored genius has dangers to encounter peculiar to itself.

In closing these remarks, it remains but to offer a few suggestions grounded on the social principle, and the desire of novelty equally inherent and inextinguishable in every human breast, and which, when brought to bear on Education, are most efficacious in promoting its aims. The advantages of companionship in study have been considered; and, with very rare exceptions, even in private tuition, however limited, a class is often desirable, and offers many advantages. More genuine talent will be elicited by a few thus engaged in concert, than by many singly occupied. A more lively ardour is kindled, rousing the mental powers to action by the cheerful aspect of social fellowship; a vital charm is communicated, urging the faculties to nobler flights by a friendly competition for the prize of honour. By the free interchange of thoughts and sentiments, brighter sparks of truth are emitted, and the native vigour of genius is harmonized and improved.

The predilection for what is novel and wonderful, or that partakes of the character of mystery, being one of the strongest of human passions, the wisdom of making it the vehicle of instruction is sufficiently apparent. Those who have excelled in the knowledge of the human heart, and of the springs by

which it is most powerfully affected, have in every age availed themselves of this predominant taste for the marvellous, as the surest medium of influencing the will, and directing its operations. In the hand of those master spirits it became a weapon of power, and was often successfully wielded in defence of the public weal, or in furtherance of private aims and individual rights.

From the simplest fable to the sublimest allegory, well-wrought fiction has a charm for every age and station, from the cradle to the tomb, and thus becomes a powerful auxiliary in the cause of Education. It is quite obvious that the impress of truth, when combined with associations of quickening interest, will be deeper and more lasting than by any formal course of discipline in which the imagination bears no part. It is when the attention is pleasurably excited, and spell-bound, as it were, that the most lively and indelible impression is produced. By a cynical exclusion of works of imagination from Education, it would be abridged of half its power, and of many solid advantages. Were instruction confined to dry and tasteless exercises, the mental energies would not only pine and languish, but run with avidity to what is pernicious; for the imagination, if not pre-occupied, will seek its aliment abroad, and glean its own materials among the promiscuous medley of good and ill, by which it is environed; whereas truth and virtue, in the attractive garb of fiction, are rendered doubly inviting, and their cordial welcome is insured.

In support of such sentiments, it may be assumed that they are in accordance with that wisdom, which is a peculiar characteristic of the sacred writings. Christianity every where borrows her illustrations from striking and familiar objects, moulding her heavenly doctrine in the form of a parable, and delivering her high mandates in metaphorical language: with success it was wielded in the darker ages, as the weapon of superstition. The oracular responses of the ancient heathen world were couched in the language of mystery, and doubtless

owed much of their celebrity to the obscurity in which they were involved: without such ambiguity they had lacked the character of sublimity, for which they were treasured and respected, and which rendered them the more impressive. Ancient authority, both sacred and profane, attest the universality and the power of this principle in the human constitution, and evidently point out the uses of its application to the purposes of Education, as giving weight and effect to the counsels of wisdom and virtue.

One of the worthiest uses of historical research is to make it subservient to the public weal in furthering the great ends of a sound education, and an enlightened policy. Its rational object is to develop the ancient springs of national good and ill, and to turn to the best account the knowledge thus derived by its prudent application to present exigencies. Among the various causes that have concurred to raise Great Britain to the summit of earthly greatness, her ancient national features obviously claim the priority; and though it may not be possible to determine precisely the amount of national good hence derived, yet none will deny that England is greatly indebted for her present exalted and commanding position to that inherent and ardent love of liberty, combined with a masculine and genuine piety, a primeval simplicity of manners, and a taste for manly and temperate pursuits, which formed the most striking features of the ancient British character.

A stern and quenchless spirit of independence was joined to a plain integrity of principle. Loyalty was true-hearted, and zeal for religion was earnest and magnanimous; hence men were firm supporters equally of public and private rights, and faithful guardians of those laws which formed the basis of the constitution, and the bulwark of the state. If to her ancient national features Britain owes so much, it is assuredly her wisdom, and should be her care, to preserve them entire, and to keep unimpaired this ancient foundation of all her solid greatness. That by which she has attained to pre-eminence

and power constitutes her best treasure; and the one proper business of Education is to second the true interests of the nation by cherishing all that is laudable in its pristine spirit, and striving to keep alive the patriotic flame in its ardour and purity. The aspect of the times is, indeed, unfriendly to this object. The present era is confessedly one of multiplied dangers and obstacles, nor can the collective powers of Education, combined with the efforts of philanthropy, insure success in the unequal struggle against the combination of causes and principles, external and internal, which are gradually perhaps, but nevertheless actively, and doubtless powerfully, working to counteract it.

To the eye even of the superficial observer, the national characteristics of the ancient British genius are evidently on the wane. The tide of innovation has been long flowing, swelled by various currents, domestic as well as foreign, and gradually undermining the ancient mounds of public and private virtue. Foreign manners, maxims, and prepossessions, have of late been largely imported, and the sterling plainness of the British character has at length assumed a high continental polish. The superficial graces of a specious exterior, and the too current assumption (in the fashionable world at least) of an unqualified tone and spirit of liberalism, have been acquired at the cost, if not of native worth, yet often perhaps of the more solid and sterling qualities, which once formed the essential components in the manly and dignified character of the well-bred Englishman.

We are told by some that the nation is progressing in refinement and freedom of sentiment, but it is a position equally tenable, perhaps, that in the general rectitude of our social habits we have been long retrograding. Levity of manners and laxity of morals are twin yoke-fellows, and always found together. The mere gloss of polished manners, how pleasing soever, is but a surface; when artfully assumed, it may indeed yield a transient charm, but true urbanity is always the native grace of virtue and truth, the unforced emanation of a superior

mind, and can only flow from what is amiable and estimable in heart and character.

The social and moral characteristics which are peculiar to any people, are doubtless most strongly marked in times of the greatest simplicity, and when intercourse with those of other nations, and of different manners, is most circumscribed; then it is that national traits are strikingly displayed, and local peculiarities most plainly developed, standing out, as it were, in bold relief; whereas in times of high civilization, when general intelligence, refinement, and luxury, blend with extensive and unrestricted communication and converse with foreigners of every class and nation, all the stronger outlines and deeper shades of distinction become gradually softened and modified, till at length they are so blended as to be no longer discernible.

Times there have been, when so rare was social intercourse between the inhabitants of the British isles and their continental neighbours, that for an Englishman of ordinary grade and occupation to bid farewell to his native shores, and sojourn among those of a strange tongue, and of manners and genius wholly different, would have been deemed a voluntary banishment, a renunciation of all that was dear to Englishmen, or that was associated with their ideas of earthly comfort and rational enjoyment. In the present day, however, and since passing and repassing from shore to shore has become as frequent and common as if a bridge had been thrown across the channel, a great social revolution has been silently but steadily progressing in the sentiments and habits of the leading classes. A strong social current has for a long season been perpetually flowing outward, undergoing a change in its course, and as constantly returning deeply impregnated with un-English principles; while largely-flowing currents, from many a foreign source, are hourly setting in, nourishing the seeds and growth of the moral innovation wherever they flow.

By such causes has the domestic taste of British society been almost new-modelled.

Bantered as our countrymen have been for a few harmless peculiarities, and often by men as much their inferiors in the sounder qualities of the heart, as surpassing them in the specious display of meretricious accomplishments; the pride of Englishmen thus appealed to, and brought to bear with power in aid of the effect, has, in many cases, given the finishing-stroke to the metamorphosis; our ancient nationalities are hence fast verging to decay. To evince such an elevation of sentiment, as effectually to repel the imputation of being swayed by antiquated prejudices, we run to an opposite extreme, and by omitting to separate the chaff from the wheat, incur the hazard of forfeiting much that is good, by a too hasty and indiscriminate rejection of what is not an evil, but at most an incumbrance. If British worth be sterling gold, let manners be the chasing—the finest gold shows best when richly wrought; but if it be overlaid with a foreign enamel, its intrinsic worth and beauty will be hidden and lost. Ancient notions and manners may in some points be exceptionable, nor are modern innovations wholly wrong; each may lay claim to its peculiar merits, and every man will judge for himself; but in this social interchange and barter it is wise to strike the balance fairly, and, by a right estimate, determine on which side the true advantage lies.

Some writers on times gone by, have commented on the difficulty of governing the British people, they being always more forward to examine and criticise, than ready to obey the decrees of their rulers; but to assume this social peculiarity as a ground of censure, argues neither depth of information nor strength of judgment. It implies no more than the ascendancy of that searching and inquisitive spirit, which is the proper medium of a right judgment in all things. From the dawn of reason, curiosity is the key of knowledge, and the investigating

spirit in manhood is but the maturer exercise of the like power: when such a spirit widely prevails, popular acquiescence will be founded on a rational conviction; and that cheerful and steady obedience will result, which is the best guarantee for the permanence of public tranquillity.

Wholly different and immeasurably inferior is the blind and slavish submission of ignorance, passively crouching beneath the iron yoke of a capricious despotism, without knowledge, free-will, or moral courage to vindicate the rights of men as reasoning and moral agents. Authority is to such but a painful restraint, rather endured from necessity than tolerated even in idea; the grand motives to a cordial acquiescence—a free agency and a recognised interest—are wanting, and hence all the life-sustaining powers of the body-politic become paralyzed; but when (reversing the position) every individual discerns and feels himself to be a deliberative and responsible agent, whose best interests are identified with the common weal, the popular character is expanded and strengthened by a fraternal union of interests, whereby each is tacitly bound to maintain what has gained the sanction and approval of all.

Extreme popular ignorance is perhaps the worst ground for an enlightened policy to work upon; the gross distortion of fact induced upon defective knowledge gives a ten-fold weight and stimulus to error, which may then work with impunity on the public mind; whence arise distractions and certain mischief. Ignorance ever gives the ascendancy to the gravest errors, necessarily inducing a sickly and disordered state of society; whereas, when intelligence is general, the collective information of the whole being brought to bear on each question of public interest, the eliciting of truth is the obvious and natural effect. An investigating spirit can be formidable only to evil governments. The noble privilege of holding fast what is good, must be preceded by the wisdom of proving all things. Rightly used, it is not an assumption to be feared, but rather to be hailed as an auspicious power, whose tendency

is to strengthen every good measure, and to further every laudable design; it is associated with that independence and vigour of mind, which results from well-tutored, and therefore well-grounded, self-esteem. It breathes the spirit of men aware of their genuine and legitimate rights, and prepared to sustain the true manly character by resisting corruption in all its forms and degrees, how specious and imposing soever. Where such a jealous and vigilant spirit presides, it may be presumed that every public and legislative act having once successfully passed the ordeal of a searching and general scrutiny, is thus securely fixed on the basis of popular conviction, and placed far beyond the reach of turbulent and senseless innovations.

All that strikes the mind as grand and imposing in the annals of the political world, or that has been most nobly achieved on the social arena of public or private life; all that stirs the patriotic breast with rapture, and elicits its applause, challenging the admiration and the homage of the heart, owes its birth to such a spirit. By its aid the greatest empires have arisen from the humblest beginnings; by the concentration of strength and of counsel, the few became formidable to the many; till at length the union of energy with perseverance was rewarded with the prize of universal empire.

The most popular among the ancient British princes and worthies owe their celebrity to the like magnanimous spirit. To its ascendancy Britain owes the great charter of national liberty, as well as the various legislative acts that have been pregnant with the greatest benefit to the nation. The barons of old were no less bold to maintain the public rights entire, than watchful to preserve their private interests; their chivalrous urbanity stooped not to compromise the interests of their country, nor brooked a delusive compact with the avowed enemies of their faith. Magnanimity and honour were the leading features of her nobles; honesty and bravery, of her people. To British hearts true heroism has ever been a ready passport, whether kindled by patriotism or zeal for the truth,

and for the honour of the great Redeemer, the all-potent Friend and Restorer of the human race. Popular enthusiasm has too much of an electric attraction to be assumed as a safe guiding-star, yet from the ray which it emits may be inferred the purity and ardour of the flame that burns within.

If to her ancient national spirit and features Britain owes so much, it is wisdom to preserve them entire, to be handed down to posterity. Foremost among these, we may recognise a genuine patriotism and a true spirit of loyalty, tempered by a watchful regard to civil and religious liberty, a stern decision of character, exalted by perseverance in pursuit of a chosen and worthy object, crowned with the frugal and domestic virtues, and dignified by a serious and manly piety. To such honourable traits every preceptor of youth can point, as to the ancient moral landmarks, the social bounds of distinction between the homes of their fathers and neighbour lands, once the proud foeman's boast. Every father can call the attention of his child to the deeds of other days, and present before his mind strong and lively portraitures of what is noble in action, and suggest the sentiment that originated, and the wisdom that guided it: he can show that integrity of purpose is the soul of invincible fortitude; and that sobriety of mind is the only soil in which the social and manly virtues can properly flourish; above all, impressing on the youthful heart that such are the only laudable steps to preferment, and that candidates for fame can no otherwise attain to true honour and lasting distinction.

Whether religion should invariably take the lead in the elementary stages of Education, is a serious and interesting question, and the more so, as having at times elicited a great diversity of opinion among men, not only of refined speculation, but of enlarged views and cultivated minds; not only the avowed sceptic, but nominal and professing christians, also have on this

point widely dissented. It will be understood that by religion taking the lead, is implied neither more nor less than the gradual and timely inculcation of those great truths and leading principles of Divine revelation, which have gained the general assent of true Christians in all ages: it implies the religious faith of Christians in its broadest sense, without any admixture of partiality, or any inclining to sectarian tenets. It further implies the doing of this in such manner as may be most impressive, giving to Divine truth its due authority, but so as most effectually to win the heart and will, and thence to regulate the conduct and the affections.

As this is a question deeply involving the happiness of human beings, it merits that close and impartial investigation which may avail with every honest mind to set it for ever at rest, and, as far as possible, to fix it on the basis of a rational and perfect conviction. In order to give the argument its full weight, and put the question in its true position, it will be proper to glance at the characteristics of genuine religion, and to touch on the leading points arising out of or directly bearing on the subject; such as the true nature, character, and tendencies of vital Christianity. It is needful that we should set out with a due estimate of its social, moral, and political importance, and of its peculiar and very extensive influence on the virtue and happiness of mankind; for if it can be proved beyond question to be essential to the perfection and felicity of human nature, the remaining part of the problem to be solved, will only be as to the season of life most fitting and proper for rightly and successfully inculcating it.

Touching the CHARACTER of the christian religion, candour must allow that it every where breathes the purest and most exalted virtue; that its truths are the most ennobling, and its morality the most sublime; and the whole sustained and enforced by the strongest motives that can animate the human breast. Its spirit is eminently social, combining all that is truly great with all that is lovely and of good report among

men; so many, in short, and so manifest are its excellences, that the more we contemplate, the more we are constrained to approve and admire. As the visible creation bears the broad impress of boundless beneficence, so in the christian revelation are strongly reflected the bright characteristics of a changeless perfection. The grand scheme of human redemption, what is it but a pure and perfect system of benevolence, the majestic plan of Divine and wholly disinterested goodness, for man's improvement and felicity, for which he can make no adequate return? nor is any expected, save his acceptance and his gratitude. For every wound that man can feel, the healing balm is freely bestowed; under every distress it sustains and comforts him, extracting a lasting good from transient ills, and converting the afflictions of life into blessings.

The grand OBJECT and DESIGN of religion, what is it but to render men wise and good, to bring glory to the Creator by advancing the happiness of his creatures, leading them to obey and please Him on earth, that they may participate in his glory and perfection hereafter? Answerable to its character and design is the benignity of its INFLUENCE; like its type, the great luminary of day, wherever its renovating power is felt, it calls forth a new creation; wherever religion sheds its heavenly rays, there will social harmony, peace and love, spring up and flourish: and in proportion as the spirit of a people is imbued with its power, the malignant passions will recede, and every vicious practice will be discountenanced and discarded. Youth will reverence age, and age will cherish and counsel youth; subjects will be loyal, and rulers beneficent and just; and in proportion as it prevails, will human society present a picture of the celestial.

Religion needs no better advocate than its intrinsic worth and dignity, which are inscribed in characters of light; but what renders it doubly dear to man, is its soothing adaptation to all the wants and frailties of his nature, and to all the incidents of human life. Viewed merely as a political engine,

its superior efficacy in restraining the unruly wills and passions of men would suffice to give it a preponderating sanction; but in every view it is more than desirable; the nature and present state of man render it imperatively needful. For a full assurance of this, as well as of the wisdom and goodness of such a dispensation, we need only take an unbiased view of man in his natural condition, the weak and sinful heir of a degenerate nature, in which whatever is evil finds its congenial soil, and too quickly takes root within him: such, in brief, is his darkened and degraded state, that naturally he is prone to all extremes of evil without the counteracting agency of religion, which alone can neutralize its power and baneful effects.

With genuine religion is associated all that can effectually stimulate a rational and dependent being to the love and practice of duty, all that is fitted to animate and cheer the soul in the path of christian rectitude. Hence are derived not only the sublimest virtues and firmest principles of moral excellence; from this perennial fountain of good also flow the grateful and refreshing streams of social affection and sympathy, the milder sensibilities and domestic charities which Christianity so warmly enforces, as being peculiarly her own. Amid the ceaseless revolution of events, she alone is unchanged; the same faithful counsellor and guide in doubts and perplexities, the prime cheerer of the soul in all dangers and distresses, the grand rectifier of error, and the great preservative from evil. All, in short, that is amiable and estimable are hers; and truly helpless and hopeless would man, in any circumstances, be without her benignant influence.

Even from this brief and imperfect sketch of the claims and benefits of vital religion, its necessary connexion with social and individual happiness may, it is presumed, be plainly inferred; and hence the wisdom and expediency of securing, by all available means, the greatest possible measure of good derivable from this heavenly source, will by every unprejudiced mind be readily allowed; and this leading point being conceded,

all that remains to be determined relates solely to the TIME and MODE as the best and wisest means of seconding so worthy and desirable an object. The main point of interest, therefore, on which the question turns, is, whether childhood or manhood is the fittest season for the right and profitable reception of religious truth; whether its impressive lessons should commence with the dawn of intellect, or whether its influence should be withheld during the stages of incipient reason, and deferred till the maturity of manly judgment?

Strange, indeed, it should seem to the honest and humble-minded christian, that any, save the confirmed sceptic or the open infidel, could seriously object to what appears to him as the plainest dictate of nature and of the heart, suggested by the most rational and interesting motives, enforced by the highest possible claims, and by more than human authority. Surprise, however, disappears on a broad view of the complicated state of society, the mixture of passion and prejudice, and the collision of interests, of sentiment and feeling, ever springing up amid the endless diversity of the human character. From such a medley discordance will naturally result, and this is actually the case with respect to every question of importance; hence religion, and objects connected with it, (which might justly claim an universal assent,) have been more the subject of contention than any other.

Indiscriminately to class and put on the same level men who dissent on very different grounds, would be equally unfair and injudicious. Objectors to early religious training may be divided generally into two classes; the first comprising men whose passions, interests, and pursuits, centering and terminating in worldly objects, are diametrically opposed to the spirit and dictates of Christianity; men of unprincipled and reprobate character; in short, all whose vices have rendered them obnoxious to its severe but just rebuke, whereby their self-pride is deeply wounded, and their opposition kindled. All such, as a matter of course, so long as they are under the

power of so fatal a delusion, will raise their veto against every thing tending to widen its sphere of operation, and confirm its authority: the sentiments of such being evidently swayed by passion, and therefore proof against conviction derivable from reason, have but a slender claim to a serious consideration.

There is, however, a very different class, composed of men of serious though prejudiced minds, whose scruples and doubts are of a conscientious kind, arising from apprehensions of the effects of religious excitement on tender minds and weak intellects, or from peculiar views of the social constitution and condition of man, tinctured, it may be, with a shade of scepticism on particular points. As honest and rational disputants, such are open to conviction, and therefore may be expected to yield to the force of truth.

Among professing christians there are not a few who, though in nowise associated with either of the above classes, yet (manifesting a total indifference on such matters, and taking no decided position) may be said to occupy neutral ground, as deeming it not of sufficient import to awaken their serious concern. Such lukewarm allies, when danger presses and foes are active, serve but to betray the cause which they have solemnly pledged themselves to defend: by their seeming desertion they throw contempt on the religion they profess to revere, and are often more dangerous than open adversaries.

In these days of boasted liberality of sentiment, some there are who, out of a professed zeal for truth, are unfriendly to early religious instruction, under the pretext of its imparting to the mind that superstitious bias, which is often the precursor of the most serious errors; consequently, they maintain that it should not be infused into the mind till the judgment is sufficiently strong to choose and reject, to weigh and determine.

To all such suggestions it is replied—If religion were merely a matter of human opinion, a question of temporal expediency, or of political import; were its influence local and limited; were its merits and authority undetermined; might its claims,

like those of the false gods of the heathens, be determined by the voice of a multitude, or the votes of a senate; were it amenable, and ultimately referable, to human judgment, many such arguments might stand; or were such objections restricted to the imparting an indirect bias by the inculcation of prejudiced tenets, dictated by party spirit and sectarian views, they might be urged on consistent grounds. No liberal Christian will contend for the manifest absurdity of perplexing a child with doctrines and dogmas which serve only to cloud the mind and sour the temper. The idea of religion, as presented to the mind of a child, should doubtless consist of broad and philanthropic views alone; as breathing a spirit of the purest and most exalted benevolence: its sublime and solemn doctrines should be imparted as the leading features in an expansive system of Divine mercy, based on eternal truth. This being fully admitted, further concession is not to be expected.

The most determined class of opponents consists chiefly of men whose minds are utterly alienated from Christianity; so repugnant to its spirit and its objects, as to be impervious to the force of reasonings grounded on its intrinsic merits: incensed at the plain dealing of a religion by which their loftiness is laid low; and looking down with haughty scorn on its humble professors, they deliberately close their eyes against the light of conviction. When reluctantly driven from their favourite ground of expediency by the irrefragable proofs of the transcendant merits of religion on this footing also (for in the outset of the argument it was shown to be eminently social, and admirably fitted to promote the virtue and happiness of mankind, and so necessary to the maintenance of harmony, that without it society would quickly be disorganized); when foiled and driven from this ground, they take refuge in the specious sophistry of a spurious philosophy, and deeply intrench themselves amid its fatal delusions. With such it is useless further to contend, since they shun all encounter on fair ground, and will not advance within the bowshot of truth;

having, indeed, the wit that can plead for error, but wanting the candour to retract it.

To the more reasonable objectors, who advance no plea but what they deem to be based on sufficient ground, and who, in the main, are friendly to religious objects, a full and satisfactory reply must necessarily involve all the merits of the question. Very dissimilar are the effects of religion on different minds, from constitutional temperament, from different degrees of faith and of knowledge, from local associations, from prejudices of whatever kind; so various, indeed, are the shades and grounds of dissent, that it would be difficult to trace the many secret springs whence doubts and objections arise; yet, since here they all bear on the same question, one general reply (after briefly noticing these differences) will, it is presumed, be deemed sufficient.

Some, from a superficial knowledge of what constitutes true religion, being strangers to its power, are apt to assign to it a speculative character rather than a Divine agency, viewing its exalted morality as its best feature; and knowing this to be in unison with that of natural religion, they are tempted to regard them as on a level in the main point, forgetting that the latter is wholly wanting in the great essential. It may inculcate similar obligations, but supplies no motive of sufficient weight to enforce obedience: this is the distinguishing prerogative of Christianity, and constitutes its intrinsic superiority.

Some who are friendly to religion, and seemingly aware of its importance, are fearful of the consequences of over-excitement in the tender mind, by exercising it on subjects beyond the grasp of its comprehension, and lest, for want of discriminating power, it should confound truth with error, and so become infected with false prejudices, which at such an age are as easily imbibed, as they are subsequently difficult to eradicate. Others are sorely prejudiced from having witnessed flagrant instances of failure or apostacy among its professors, or are disgusted at the shameless conduct of such as from

sordid motives have assumed a pious mask, and claimed the homage due to sanctity and worth.

Ignorance on religious subjects is, perhaps, the most common ground of doubt and scepticism; yet indecision is not unfrequently the infirmity of certain minds of refined taste and sentiment, and even of highly cultivated intellect. Pride of understanding begets a spirit of self-sufficiency, whence too often result a culpable reserve and shyness towards religion. From certain vague and ill-defined notions of the dignity of human reason, viewing it as a heavenly attribute, they deem it all-sufficient for the guidance of man, when doubt or difficulty intervenes. Reason having perhaps decided wisely for them in many a weighty matter, they trust it will never betray them into error. To prepossess the mind of a child with convictions of any kind, appears to them an invasion of the rights of reason's free agency, which they hold to be the birthright of man. Some such will perhaps lay a stress on the fact, that Locke's great plea for the christian religion was deduced from its perfect agreement with the highest dictates of reason.

Touching this latter and too prevalent fallacy, it may, in passing, be observed, that the submission of reason to heavenly truth, and to the power of faith, is the first great sacrifice required, as a pledge of sincerity. Christianity, as a Divine and perfect system, never did nor can submit to a test so defective and erroneous as mere human judgment must prove on subjects of which, in herself, she is necessarily ignorant; the things eternal, of which it treats, being wholly above her sphere. Though few Christians are so ignorant of parental duty as to be at a loss on such points, yet it is to be remembered that, with the majority of questioners, the reasons which influence them avail but little; excepting, perhaps, the class of neutrals, some of whom may need but a sufficient stimulus to arouse them from the apathy of indifference, and win their cordial co-operation. Many are apt to regard religion as a melancholy thing, little congenial to the gaiety of youth; it

may be, they admit, a cure for the evils of life, suited to times of sickness, and needful to age and infirmity; but they see not that the children of their religious neighbours are better than their own, and think it needless to abridge the season of youth of its transient pleasures and liberty. In a political view, they allow it great merit as effectually awing the vulgar, and checking such as are to be restrained from mischief only by their fears; but think it will be time enough for the young to seek relief from religion when worldly cares assail, and its never-failing troubles overtake them.

In reply to those who are influenced by motives so weak in a matter so important, and to all who, from whatever causes, are unfriendly to early religious instruction, or who treat it with indifference, as of secondary import, or would merely postpone it till a more advanced period, the author would submit the following considerations; and then endeavour briefly, but satisfactorily, to pursue the chain of argument to which they naturally lead.

From the state of the mind in childhood, and the circumstances in which it is placed, he would infer its peculiar aptitude to receive and retain religious impressions.

From the pre-occupied state of the mind at any subsequent period (whether of advanced youth or manhood), aided by various concurrent causes, may be inferred its inaptitude for such impressions.

Childhood and manhood—compared.

The incompatibility of advocating religion for manhood, while withholding its influence from childhood.

The danger of delay, from the consequences of leaving the mind unoccupied and destitute of religion during its season of greatest leisure, and when its powers are most active, its necessary tendency being to weaken its hold and authority, by alienating the mind from its influences.

Considerations grounded on the uncertainty of life; on the

authority and express command of revelation; and the conditional nature of its benefits.

Whence may be deduced—that to deny religious instruction to youth, is, in effect, to withhold its beneficial influence from manhood, thereby proportionably depriving society of the many and great advantages derivable from it.

Finally—that the general tendency of such a consequence would be ultimately to banish religion from the world, and to bereave mankind of its endless and inestimable benefits.

By the all-wise appointment of Providence, the incipient stage of rational existence is admirably fitted to receive and retain the instructions needful for its safe guidance in the path of life which lies before it: hence the mind is then pliant and docile, its new-born faculties fresh and lively, unclouded by prejudice and passion, and the seat of innocence and candour. Aptly, therefore, has it been compared to a sheet of blank paper, on which we may inscribe what characters we please.

Childhood has nothing to do but to receive instruction, and possesses all the requisites for it, with a restless craving for information. A child must, nay, will be taught: curiosity is ever on the wing, and if we timely provide not for it, it will speedily select for itself. The principle, that first impressions are lasting, supplies also a powerful plea for the early inculcation of truth, it being the surest means of excluding error.

In every pressing emergency, it is wisdom to secure first what is of the greatest value; and doubtless the first serious impressions made on the infant mind should relate to things of the highest worth and import: the fitness and beauty of truth it may not appreciate; but the attractive features of virtue, and the grand outlines of truth, when traced with a skilful hand, will rarely fail to captivate and convince the innocent and susceptible heart.

As soon as the mind can discriminate, it should doubtless be taught to distinguish right from wrong, truth from falsehood;

lest, by confounding good and evil, its native candour should but serve to betray it into error. The active thoughts, if not now directed aright, will run to every extreme, and wildly roam, an easy prey to every delusion; for, congenial as truth and virtue are to the innocent mind, yet in order to give them a lasting ascendancy, they should be pourtrayed in their native loveliness, with all that can charm and win the uncorrupted heart; equally needful is it that vice be also depicted with form and traits the most disgusting, so as to render it the object of stronger and more fixed aversion.

The seasons, with their spring-time and harvest, are strictly analogous to the corresponding periods of human life. Seed-time, the first in both, if in either case neglected, the harvest must fail. All reasoning and analogy deducible from nature's laws, tend to favour religious instruction, and to enforce its timely obligation. Early must the seeds of the christian virtues be sown, to blossom in youth and ripen in manhood. If the mild and heavenly spirit of Christianity be in unison with the human mind at any period of life, it must be in its state of innocence and purity; the unspotted breast of child-hood is doubtless the fittest and holiest sanctuary for so celestial a guest, wherein the christian graces may at once enter and abide as their native home. Abundant reason will there be to hope, that thus timely planted in the guile-less heart, they will progress with its growth, and strengthen with its maturity; and that the mind being thus seasonably filled with good, there will be little room for the admission of evil. It is only when thus early kindled, that the flame of devotion may be expected to shine with increasing power unto the perfect day, and brighten to meridian splendour.

Taking, in the aggregate, that portion of mankind whose education, as it respects religion, has been wholly superficial, principle is apparently powerless against the seductions of the world, and the mind becomes quickly moulded and fashioned to its temper and spirit: hence such have been pointedly

termed men of the world; and a stronger contrast can hardly be imagined than such characters present to the meek docility of childhood, or to that state of mind most proper for the cordial reception of Christian truth. Without the wholesome leaven of a Divine principle to counteract temptation, they become the willing captives of sinful habits and prejudices. So hotly are their desires engaged in the chase of worldly vanities, and so engrossed are all their faculties and affections, that every avenue to the heart is closed; thus are they whirled in a ceaseless round of excitement, and distracted by alternate hopes and fears, which follow in rapid succession, till at length they are reduced to a state of thraldom almost hopeless and irremediable.

In minds thus embarrassed, there is a keen disrelish for religion and its serious calls to duty; whence they eagerly turn to the world for relief, and drink deeply of its sensual consolations, which serve but to alienate their minds yet more from the power of better but "unseen things," which having never felt, nor fully known, they little appreciate: compunctions may visit, and convictions may assail, but being unwelcome, they will be transient and powerless. Inaptitude to religion, from whatever cause it spring, is an evil of rapid growth, and too commonly strengthens on acquaintance with the world. To start in life with such a bias is an indication so ominous, as to prompt the inference that such a mind is destined to forego its beneficial influence in this life, with the awful possibility of for ever forfeiting the exalted blessings of which it is the sole medium and condition.

Taking men as we find them, and children as they are sent into the world, they present a remarkable contrast in the qualities and circumstances most favourable to the influence of religion: to the spirit of a child it seems to be as congenial as it is uninviting to worldly men. In childhood the mind is wholly disengaged and free; in manhood the time and faculties are fully engrossed, its energies and affections wholly

pre-engaged. In the child, all is candour and openness, and religion easily wins access, and takes an impressive hold on the mind; whereas manhood is reserved, haughty, and untractable, and the force of prejudice is oft so strong, as roughly to repel and bar access to its approaches. Childhood has no pride, no motive to resist its power; whereas in manhood, the mind is the common haunt of passions that rebel against its authority. The docility of childhood is like the gentle stream at its source, that will take any direction we give it; the strong prepossessions and impetuosity of manhood resemble the resistless torrent, or the river broad and deep, flowing with full current in its time-worn channel: the one is a fortress that must be taken by storm; the other resembles the humble abode of nature's child, whose doors are ever open to the stranger, and beneath whose friendly roof the traveller finds hospitality and welcome. In childhood, all combines to favour; in manhood, to discourage: in the one case religion has to encounter a lion; in the other a lamb.

If inaptitude to religion is a frailty so prevalent in the natural will, and of so rapid growth, we may infer that it takes early root in the neglected mind, and strengthens with progressive years. To delay it, therefore, even till a later period in youth, is to deprive it of half its efficacy; while to defer it till manhood, may be deemed scarce less than to discard it altogether. Professing to advocate religion on general grounds, while withholding its influence from childhood, carries absurdity on the face of it, and forms one of those striking anomalies, that serve well to betray the weakness of an argument, or the badness of a cause. So much more difficult is the practice than the profession of religion, that its most cordial acceptance will not insure its proper fruits; nor can it be deemed strange that its power, even when early instilled, should be sometimes eclipsed by the too potent enchantments of the world.

If to will and to do were the same; if a man could lay aside and alter his habits, as he changes his dress, he might turn and

become religious when he pleased; but who thus thinks will, perhaps, upon trial, find, to his dismay, that time and habit have done that for him, which, without their united aid, he cannot undo. The premature experiment would beget a perpetual warfare between inclination and conviction; till, weary of the vain struggle, he might be tempted to give up the contest in despair. Few are so ignorant as not to be aware that the benefits of religion are conditional, and that the use of the means must precede the end; but religion, in its full and proper sense, implies so many acquisitions, such victory over corruptions, such a reform in the manners and habits, such a renovation of heart and will; in short, so many and weighty are its demands, that, assuming life at its longest date, and as a season of uninterrupted leisure, aided by a cordial assent and every concurrent help, it is evident that too much could not even then be done; and that, commence as early as we may, there will be no superfluity of time, for the highest earthly attainment is but comparative excellence, and a nearer approach to the standard of perfection.

The manifold indications of the aptitude of the mind for religious instruction in early youth, and the equally numerous proofs of its subsequent and growing inaptitude (when neglected), with the many arguments in favour of early training scattered throughout this volume, with many more that might doubtless be urged, all combine to evince the wisdom and efficacy of leading the mind betimes to sober and enlightened views of religious truth; and equally proclaim the inconsistency of such as affect to eulogize religion as man's chief good, and as fraught with the most solid and lasting benefits, yet, from weak and ill-founded scruples, persist in withholding its influences from the mind when only it is in a state to imbibe them fully in the spirit of purity and simplicity.

To exclude religion and revealed truth from elementary education would be to divest it of its most dignified and useful office, and of its most engaging features; it would be to render

it an insipid and heartless round of mere formal dicta, depriving the infant mind of its choicest nourishment, of that by which the heart, with its best feelings and affections, are most powerfully and pleasurably excited. It would deprive the tutor and the parent of the most grateful task in the round of instruction, that of imparting to the innocent and awe-struck mind, the wondrous truths and sublime dictates of revelation. The tutor's pleasure is here enhanced by the sense of performing a high duty, with the assurance of its beneficial results; for all that strikes the youthful mind as eminently great and good, is received with unhesitating and unqualified credence. In the pure and heavenly commerce between the filial and the maternal breast especially, there is a spell of power, a virtue, and a nameless charm, aloof from the world and independent of human reasonings, a holy and effectual compact approved and sealed by heaven.

In further reply to those who would defer the all-important work of religious instruction till an advanced state of the reasoning faculties, it is asked, What is to supply its place? and is there no danger in such an experiment? Are we absurdly to infer that the mind is a mere passive engine, that will remain still at our bidding? Is the human soul a machine, whose will and operation we can suspend at pleasure? will it at our command continue free from prejudice and error, and from all extraneous influences? and will it thus remain without a bias of any kind, till the period we choose to appoint shall arrive? Rather in the interim, the very season of credulity, but wherein all its powers are most active, and when it is most rapid in acquisitions of some kind or other, will it not, for want of being timely pre-occupied by truth, be open for the admission of every error? Destitute of a controlling principle during its most restless and inquisitive season, left to its own selection, and free to follow its own wayward workings, it will become the dupe of its own inexperience: in the absence of wisdom folly will enter in, and

alternately it will become the victim of every plausible fallacy. The mind, being unguarded, and open alike to influences of every kind, good or ill, will seek only to satisfy its present cravings. The high principles and motives of Christianity having no place in it, there will be ample room and welcome for every folly and flattering delusion. The vigour of health and the exuberance of youthful spirits increase the evil by superadding a glow and a charm to objects of sense, which are but too captivating at all times to the youthful heart.

Without a strong rectifying principle within, the world too soon acquires an absolute dominion over the lively and susceptible temperament of youth, and reigns without a rival. When pampered and become impatient of restraint, will the passions submit to a voluntary yoke, cancel the charter of their own liberty and self-will, and forego their accustomed indulgences? Rather will not all evil influences be congregated in the mind, gather strength till it become so familiarized and identified with the world and its gaieties, that long ere the judging faculty be fully developed, he will be numbered among its most devoted adherents, even glorying, perhaps, in a reckless profligacy and daring impiety? Such are among the probable and fatal consequences of leaving the youthful mind wholly destitute of a Divine and sufficient safeguard during the time of greatest peril to its virtue.

To the sensual eye of ignorance the world proffers all that it conceives of good: too soon the heart becomes linked to its vanities by the strong ties of sense, till, pressed into its service, it joins the ranks of infidelity against that religion which is the great censor of vanity and vice, the declared adversary of the spirit and wisdom of the world, which it emphatically denounces as the arch-betrayer of man, the great destroyer of his peace. The very simplicity of ignorance but serves to render it helpless, and accelerate its doom. The prey will be quickly marked by the wily agents of mischief; and their

nets will be artfully spread around the path of their hapless and too ready victim.

To the natural will all duty savours of restraint, and, when corrupted, the greatest latitude will scarce suffice to content it. As the relish for the world increases, so the control of the accustomed liberty becomes painful; and the power and the will to appreciate and relish the beauty of holiness, or to love the truth for its own sake, will utterly fail. Conviction, if possible, could not be welcome to such a mind; nor would it meekly bow to a system of doctrine and discipline whose grand object is to sanctify the heart, by crucifying its affections and lusts. A religion, of which such know little or nothing, can present no motives so weighty as to turn them from their smooth and beaten ways into the thorny paths of self-denial.

The consistently religious character can be the proper result only of principles early and habitually grounded. If a youth enter the world with half-formed and unsettled notions and convictions, it follows, in course, that the little religion he has will quickly be swallowed up and neutralized by more lively and pleasurable excitement. The very fact, of not timely and seriously enforcing it, must tend to destroy its authority; that on which so little stress has been laid they will naturally deem of little import, which error must also greatly endanger its cordial acceptance at any subsequent period.

The danger and absurdity of delaying to form the mind to the great views and interests of religion till after it has become moulded to the world, would be like the folly of attempting to shape the clay to our purpose after it has been moulded and hardened in an uncouth and contrary form; or as yielding up possession of the fortress when in our power, and then attempting to dislodge the enemy by force.

If we would impart to the stream a healing virtue, we must ascend to the spring, and impregnate the waters at their source: to attempt to infuse a healing quality into the flowing current

at a distance from the fountain head, would be vain and wholly useless; and if we design the stream of life to flow with a wholesome and uniform current, we must go to the source, and betimes imbue the heart with christian graces, that virtue and truth may flow and increase with the lapse of years: comparatively futile will be the attempt after the full tide of youthful vanity has set in, and the rapidity of the current is accelerated by a pampered and wayward will. If man be not trained to piety in his youth, whither shall we turn, or where expect to witness its settled influences? What will then become of religion? In vain shall we look for the fruit in its season, if we have taken no heed to plant in due time.

If the foregoing remarks be founded in truth, and sustained by facts, the arguments they supply will go far to verify the original proposition, which with its final and fearful deduction, will need no further confirmation. It must then be conceded, that in proportion to the neglect of early religious instruction, manhood, and consequently society, will be barren and destitute of its influence and benefits; also that the necessary result of such a state of things must be gradually to neutralize the power and efficacy of religion, tending ultimately to banish it from the world.

It is evident that a deduction so sweeping and serious can only apply to religion in its highest and best sense, as superstition, its counterfeit, could never be wanting. Some sense of religious obligation, however obscured or corrupted, has been indelibly impressed by the Creator on the mind of every thinking being. In the rude idolatry of the most savage tribes, no less than in the extravagant polytheism of the polished nations of antiquity, the supreme rule of a Divine agency has been alike acknowledged. It would therefore be a gross mistake to assume that even the entire subversion of genuine religion would be marked by the corresponding absence of all that bears its name, and has been falsely connected with it. Religion, in this view, can never want a substitute. In the

absence of the true, the counterfeit would remain: as the one advances, the other must recede. So far is it from true, as ignorance pretends, that Christianity is associated with superstition and enthusiasm, that, in fact, it is the only antidote of power to neutralize their baneful influence; it alone can, and does, effectually dispel the delusion and the mischief. A religious impress, whether right or wrong, being commonly the strongest in the human breast, evidently needs the wisest control. Whenever the pure light of truth is veiled and obscured by the mists of ignorance and passion, whereby its beneficial influence is suspended, then invariably do superstition and enthusiasm spring up in every degrading form, and spread with wild and rapid growth.

The Christian's Bible is his all-sufficient chart, his infallible guide, wherein each line of duty is plainly traced, and the confines of evil marked out by the master pen of truth. To the paths that end in peace she invites with eloquent and holy zeal, and warns from all that lead aside to the dark mountains of error. Her friendly calls he knows it is his wisdom and happiness to obey: he has experimented her predictions, and seen them realized in the fate of others. To the parental heart she speaks in no doubtful terms; friendly, but solemn, is her appeal, and her voice is decisive. To high and low, to rich and poor, alike she points to one strait path, and pronounces those only happy who obey. Weighing the enduring realities of an endless future against the passing frivolities of time, she strongly contrasts parental wisdom with the fatal infatuation of indifference, and neglect! In its providential dispensations, often has the retributive hand of Heaven been openly displayed in its dealings with parents, making their children a blessing or a curse, the happy medium of lasting and heartfelt satisfaction, or of the severest worldly punishment, doubly embittered by a ceaseless regret!

Such even as are most conversant with the oracles of truth can but weakly appreciate the worth and magnitude of the

things of religion: its high and changeless character, its comprehensive nature, its many and important requisitions, the conditional nature of its benefits, the weakness of reason and human endeavour, and the uncertain date of life,—all concur to press upon the serious mind the indelible conviction of the guilt and folly of omission in a concern so momentous. If religion be not an empty name, it is of greater worth than language can express; and if so, to close with it at once is the highest privilege that man can aspire to, and his truest wisdom will be to extract from it all possible good for his offspring as well as himself.

In the early culture of the mind, and in matters of religion especially, extremes are judiciously to be avoided; as on the one hand it would be reprehensible to taint the uncorrupted mind with a superstitious bias; on the other, it could be no less blameable, under cover of such a pretext, to keep the main points of religion wholly out of sight. Paternal wisdom must here draw the line; and, doubtless, it behoves every father to tell his son, that, as a rational being, it is his duty to weigh and investigate for himself, to exercise his understanding in quest of truth, and to take nothing for granted that will not endure the test of a searching and diligent scrutiny, but to place it in the strongest light, and examine it on all sides. To the prudent dictates of paternal affection the filial heart will gratefully respond, and fully acquiesce in the propriety of sentiments which conscience and reason must equally approve.

By some mismanagement, religion is too often rendered unwelcome to the young, as presenting a forbidding aspect of mingled gloom and austerity, and armed with threats and frowns; but were she uniformly arrayed in her native and celestial graces, decked with the cheering smiles of benevolence, she could not fail of a most cordial reception. Whether it be that a secret consciousness on the parent's part, of undue indulgence and levity at other times, prompts the laying of a more rigid stress on seasons of devotion, in order to counteract the ill effects that might ensue from such laxity; certain it is that

a formal and solemn demeanour is enforced, little congenial with the general habits and sprightliness of youth; and hence, instead of honouring and greeting the sabbath with christian cheerfulness, as a season of social refreshment and devout thankfulness to the Great Author of good, the heavy wheels of time seem to drag an unusual load, and the youthful spirits are oppressed with an unnatural and anti-social gloom. From dealing thus unfairly with religion, results a fatal distaste, which too often ripens into an open and undisguised hostility.

Religion is not only the vehicle of every good, it is also the sole and sovereign remedy for the worst of existing evils. Nothing less than its pure and potent energy could eradicate the deeply-rooted and long-flourishing errors of superstition, arrest the mad career of idolatry, and quell the rage of enthusiasm and fanaticism, whose deadly vials have so oft been poured out on the nations, infusing a tenfold bitterness into the cup of human suffering—no minor power could subvert their fatal dominion, and illumine the dark places of the earth. In the fulness of time Christianity came forth, bearing her high commission to raise and restore a fallen world, and to convert anarchy and discord into harmony and peace. She found it, distracted and rent, helpless and hopeless, lying in the shadow of death, its high places defiled by the fanes of paganism, and wrapped in idolatrous gloom—but wondrously has she wrought; and what she has done is a sufficient pledge of what she can and will do, even fulfilling to the letter every word of grace, that has gone forth in the might of changeless truth.

As the shades of night recede before the clear light of the morning, so surely the spectral gloom of heathenism, whether in its simplest and rudest forms of idol worship, or assuming the fabled romance and extravagance of a more refined polytheism, is doomed alike to flee and disappear at the searching presence of truth, before whose brighter splendour the false lights of human philosophy grow dim and fade away.

So Divine and mighty a work as the moral renovation of a

world, demanded a more than human agency: here all the forces of reason were powerless and futile. To religion the great task was assigned, and to her exclusively was given strength to fulfil it. Less than a perfect and all-sufficient plan could not emanate from the unerring source of wisdom; it must therefore prevail and progress in its triumphant career till the end of time, even till death itself, the insatiable arch-foe of man, is finally crushed. With religion alone are the Divine evidences of power and of truth: the perfection of knowledge and virtue are hers, with all the motives that can permanently stimulate so frail a creature as man. But though the best philosophy could ill supply the place of religion, the design of Heaven doubtless was not to supersede reason, but to restore her to her native and original dignity; yet such is her weakness, compared with Christianity, that she cannot rise even to a perfect conception of the complicated operations and bearings of a scheme so divinely comprehensive.

Equally strong are the claims of religion to the respect as to the gratitude of man; the homage of the understanding no less than of the heart is her just tribute. In her manifold struggles with a degenerate world, in all points she has proved nobly superior, and evinced her high descent, by deriving constant accessions of strength from oft and vainly renewed opposition. In times of surpassing degeneracy, when wronged and dishonoured, her name branded with reproach, and her august form mutilated, the intelligent and good could, through all disguise, discern and own the majesty of truth. To us she is revealed in all her native loveliness and symmetry, arrayed in celestial charms, and beaming with cloudless light, shedding freely her benignant influence on all who embrace her: she comes not dowerless to man, but laden with the choicest gifts of futurity and of time, and the guileless and upright breast is her chosen seat, and is a faith all divine, breathing only truth and peace and love: is it such a religion

that Christians seemingly impart so sparingly to their children, as if in doubt they halted between two opinions?

That heavenly code, whose supreme worth and merits are not fully appreciable by man, cannot be too much prized and eulogized, nor can a sound christian education be too strongly advocated; for all that can be done will never suffice to put religion on a footing of equal advantage with its rival, the world, whose present influences are all potent with the youthful heart, whose day-dreams and bright anticipations are wholly of its spirit. The fervid pulse of youth beats only for the pleasures of that world, whose ascendancy it is the grand object of Christianity to counteract; that world, which to overcome, nay, to crucify to himself, is the Christian's arduous but glorious and needful conquest, would he give proof of his aspiring to an elevated standard of christian heroism;—a victory this, as unintelligible as it is impracticable to many, perhaps, who have been trained only to the world: but till religion has all the possible advantages that can be given to it, aided by example and endeavour, neither may we expect fully to witness its good effects, nor can its merits and efficacy be fairly estimated.

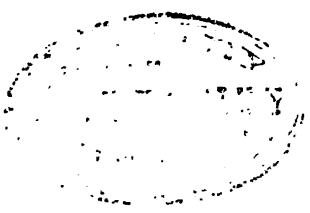
Friendly to religion as is the general aspect of the times, and auspicious as are the many indications of christian zeal, yet much that meets the eye, being associated chiefly with the literature of the day, may, after floating awhile on the surface of society, sink into oblivion, without a more stable support than the popular, and perhaps transient taste of the age; nor can we hope to give it any permanent social character, without creating for it a standing interest in the breasts of youth, and enlisting the rising generation in its cause.

To the lasting praise of Britain, she has for ages been the abiding-place of true religion: to the serious and manly temperament of Englishmen her spirit has proved happily congenial, and with them she has ever found a home and a

sanctuary. In times of peril they have sent forth able champions in her cause, and among them she still numbers her warmest friends, her true and unshaken adherents; nor has their well-tried fidelity lacked its reward. To its edifying influence, doubtless, Britain owes no small share of her unrivalled greatness; but whatever be the present state of things, all good with the wise is prospective: rightly to value the means of happiness is not enough; to lay hold on advantages, and claim an interest in what is most worthy and excellent, is good; but far better is it to make that interest abiding, to invest those advantages with the character of perpetuity; and freely to communicate them to all around, is the better and nobler object.

How essentially the stability and prosperity of these favoured realms are blended with the influences of true religion, and how much these depend on timely culture, are questions of sufficient interest to merit a mature consideration; but never, till man shall tread the confines of eternity, can he fully appreciate the worth of education grounded on the principles of christian virtue. When admitted within the golden portals that open to the glories of the unseen future, we become eye-witnesses of its scenes, surrounded by its splendours, and mingling with its celestial society in the full fruition of a blissful immortality, then may we attempt to sum the vast amount; nor in the contrasted fate of the victims of neglect, whose doom so justly involves the authors of their woe, would the heart probably encounter a less forcible appeal. How terrible a secret might the grieving spirit reveal to insensate apathy, to sceptic pride and heartless sensuality! And with how solemn a warning might its chiding voice arrest the ear of parental indifference, and chase away the fatal mists of illusion! When, with views and faculties divinely strengthened and expanded, the spirit, from its future elevation, shall revolve the past, and in their final issue weigh the import of all sublunary aims; in the broad retrospect of time's finished course, what a span will

human life appear! how insignificant its bustle and concerns! how empty and fleeting its rewards and its honours! Its vanity alone will be magnified. When its hopes and cares and fears shall be retraced, as a dream that is past, and as a vision of the night; then will be seen, in their rich and enduring rewards, the advantages of wisdom, and the worth of truth and virtue; then will be known, and fully understood, the importance of a sound christian education.



J. Rider, Printer, 14, Bartholomew Close, London.

EXTRACTS

FROM THE EARLY REVIEWS OF THE WORK.

"This book contains very judicious remarks, and a high-toned expression of reverence for religion. The author strongly points out the benefits conferred by education, and the evils arising from neglect. He deduces its necessity from the nature and prospects of a human soul, as connected with the obligations and motives of Christianity: he shows it to be 'an intellectual engine of superhuman power, and mighty to achieve either good or ill, shaping the destiny of man in time and in eternity.' After dispassionately viewing consequences, &c., he proceeds to those minor details into which his work naturally branches. *Youthful emulation* he strongly advocates, but reprobates *premature study* as subversive of mental and physical energy, (in which numerous instances justify him.) Mr. ANTROBUS's observations are *very pertinent*, and are certainly the offspring of *deep reflection*. His style inclines to the *florid*, many of his *figures* are *very elegant*, and the book is one which we can honestly recommend."—*Church of England Quarterly Review.*

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